

**Gender and Land Ownership in Zimbabwean Literature: A
Critical Appraisal in Selected Shona Fiction**

By

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I Enna Sukutai Gudhlanga declare that: **Gender and Land Ownership in Zimbabwean Literature: A Critical Appraisal in Selected Shona Fiction** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



SIGNATURE

05 December 2016

DATE

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DEDICATION

To my late mother, Dorothy Gudyanga (nee Kawadza); my late paternal grandmother, Tambudza Ruth Gudyanga (nee Mujima); and my late sister-in-law, Stembile Mlema (nee Khumbula),

Mighty women of valour who touched my life in a very special way,

Never lived long enough to see the success of your efforts.

You stood by what you believed in,

Fighting for equal opportunities in life

Irrespective of gender.

Continue to rest in eternal peace.

ABSTRACT

The study has been prompted by the gap that exists regarding gender and land in Zimbabwean fiction. The study therefore seeks to interrogate the gender and land ownership discourse in Shona fiction in relation to the current conflict of access to land by race, class and gender. The study therefore examines the following fictional works; *Feso* (1956), *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* (1967), *Pafunge* (1972), *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* (1985), *Vavariro* (1990) and *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005). Of significance is the fact that the selected fictional works traverse the different historical periods that Zimbabwe as a nation has evolved through. Apart from analysing the selected fictional works, the study also collected data through open-ended interviews and questionnaires to triangulate findings from the fictional works. The selected fictional writers present the different experiences of black Zimbabweans through land loss and the strategies taken by the indigenous people in trying to regain their lost heritage, the land. The exegesis of the selected fictional works is guided by Afro-centred perspectives of Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity. Findings from most of the selected fictional works reveals the selective exclusion of blacks, both male and female, from accessing land and other vital resources from the colonial right up to post-independence periods in Zimbabwe. The study observes that Shona traditional culture accorded both genders the requisite space in terms of land ownership in the pre-colonial period. The study also establishes that colonialism through its numerous legislations stripped black men and women of the fertile land which they formerly collectively owned. The study also establishes that disillusioned black men and women worked extremely hard to regain their lost land as reflected in the unsanctioned land grabs as well as the government sanctioned Fast Track Land Reform Programme. Recommendations for future research include the expansion of such research to include works of fiction in other languages as well as different genres. Future land policies stand to benefit from the inclusion of women in decision making since women the world over have been confirmed as workers of the land. This is likely to deal with the gender divide regarding land ownership patterns both within and outside Zimbabwe.

Key words: Gender, land ownership, Shona Fiction, expropriation, Africana Womanism, Afrocentricity, land reform, colonialism, customary tenure, individual ownership

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Background to the Study.....	1
1.1 Statement of the problem.....	3
1.2 Aim of the Study	4
1.3 Objectives.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	4
1.5 Justification.....	5
1.6 A Brief Literature Review	6
1.7 Theoretical Framework.....	13
1.8 Research Methodology	14
1.9 Scope of Study	15
1.10 Conclusion.....	17
1.11 Definition of Terms	17
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	22
2.0 Introduction.....	22
2.1 An Overview of Gender and Land Ownership in Asia	23
2.1.1 Gender and Land Ownership in India.....	24
2.1.2 Gender and Land Ownership in Bangladesh.....	29
2.1.3 Gender and Land Ownership in Vietnam.....	32
2.1.4 Gender and Land Ownership in China.....	34
2.1.5 Gender and Land Ownership in Pakistan.....	37
2.1.6 Gender and Land Ownership in Philippines.....	38
2.1.7 Summary on Gender and Land Ownership in Asia.....	39
2.2 An Overview of Gender and Land Ownership in Latin-America.....	40
2.2.1 Gender and Land Ownership in Bolivia	42

2.2.2 Gender and Land Ownership in Brazil.....	45
2.2.3 Gender and Land Ownership in Peru.....	48
2.2.4 Gender and Land Ownership in Mexico.....	51
2.2.5 Summary on Gender and Land Ownership in Latin America	54
2.3 An Overview of Gender and land ownership in Sub-Saharan Africa.....	55
2.3.1 Gender and Land Ownership in Cameroon	57
2.3.2 Gender and Land Ownership in Ghana.....	61
2.3.3 Gender and Land Ownership in Nigeria.....	64
2.3.4 Gender and Land Ownership in Uganda	67
2.3.5 Gender and Land Ownership in Kenya.....	70
2.3.6 Gender and Land Ownership in Tanzania.....	73
2.3.7 Gender and Land Ownership in Zambia.....	74
2.3.8 Gender and Land Ownership in Botswana	75
2.3.9 Gender and Land Ownership in South Africa.....	76
2.3.10 Summary on Gender and Land Ownership in Sub-Saharan Africa.....	80
2.4 Gender and Land Ownership in Zimbabwe	80
2.4.1 Gender and Land Ownership in Pre-colonial Zimbabwe	81
2.4.2 Gender and Land Ownership in Colonial Zimbabwe.....	84
2.4.3 Gender and Land Ownership in Post-Independence Zimbabwe.....	89
2.4.3.1 Types of Land Ownership in Post -Independence Zimbabwe.....	92
2.4.3.2 Gender and Fast Track Land Reform.....	96
2.5 Implications of Land Ownership Patterns in Contemporary Zimbabwe	98
2.6 Conclusion.....	100
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	102
3.0 Introduction.....	102
3.1 Africana Womanism.....	102
3.1.1 Africana Womanism Versus Feminism	104
3.1.2 The Main Tenets of Africana Womanism.....	108

3.2 Afrocentricity.....	115
3.2.1 The Main Tenets of Afrocentricity.....	116
3.2.2 The Significance of Afrocentricity.....	119
3.3 Conclusion.....	120
4.0 Introduction.....	122
4.1 Research Design	122
4.1.1 Qualitative Research.....	122
4.1.1 The Strengths of Qualitative Research.....	123
4.1.2 The Shortcomings of Qualitative Research.....	126
4.1.3 Justification of Qualitative Research	127
4.2 Research Participants	128
4.3 Sampling Strategies	130
4.4 Research Instruments or (Methods of Gathering Data).....	132
4.4.1 Interviews	133
4.4.1.1 Types of Interviews	134
4.4.1.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Interview Method	135
4.4.2 Questionnaires.....	138
4.4.2.1 Types of Questionnaires.....	138
4.4.2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Questionnaire Method.....	139
4.4.3 Desk Research and / Document Analysis.....	140
4.4.3.1 Document Analysis of Selected Shona Fictional Works	140
4.4.3.2 Secondary Sources	142
4.5 Justification for Complementary Sources of Data Collection.....	143
4.6 Ethical Considerations	143
4.7 Conclusion.....	145
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	146
5.0 Selected Fictional Works, Interviewees and Respondents' Perspectives	146
5.1 Introduction.....	146
5.2 Data Generated from Selected Fictional Works	147

5.2.1 A Synopsis of <i>Feso</i> (1956)	147
5.2.2 A Synopsis of <i>Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe</i> (1967).....	149
5.2.4 A Synopsis of <i>Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo</i> (1985).....	154
5.2.5 A Synopsis of <i>Vavariro</i> (1990)	158
5.2.6 A Synopsis of <i>Sekai Minda Tave Nayo</i> (2005).....	163
5.3 Land as a Hallmark of Existence in African Philosophy	165
5.3.1 Land as Hallmark of Existence in <i>Feso</i>	167
5.4 Colonial Penetration and its Effects on Gender and Land Ownership	178
5.4.1 Colonial Penetration and its Effects on Gender and Land Ownership in <i>Feso</i>	180
5.4.1.1 A Critique of Mutswairo's Social Vision in <i>Feso</i>	189
5.4.2 The Colonial Farm and its Effects on Gender and Land Ownership in <i>Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe</i>	191
5.4.2.1 A Critique of Chakaipa's Social Vision in <i>Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe</i>	214
5.4.3 Religious Hypocrisy and its Effects on Gender and Land Ownership in <i>Pafunge</i>	218
5.4.3.1 A Critique of Tsodzo's Social Vision in <i>Pafunge</i>	236
5.4.4 A Summary of the Selected Fictional Works on the Effects of Colonial Legislations on Gender and Land Ownership	240
5.5 Land Reform: Redressing the Colonial and Gender Injustices in Land Ownership in Post-independent Zimbabwe.....	241
5.5.1 Early Resettlement, Disillusionment, Betrayal and Spontaneous Peasant Land Occupations in <i>Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo</i>	247
5.5.1.1 A Critique of Moyo's Social Vision in <i>Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo</i>	261
5.5.2 Early Resettlement, Disillusionment, Betrayal and Spontaneous Peasant Land Occupations in <i>Vavariro</i>	264
5.5.2.1 A Critique of Choto's Social Vision in <i>Vavariro</i>	282
5.5.3 A Summary of the selected fictional Works on Early Resettlement, Disillusionment, Betrayal and Spontaneous Peasant Land Occupations.....	287
5.5.4 Fast Track Land Reform and Gender Justice in <i>Sekai Minda Tave Nayo</i>	288
5.5.4.1 A Critique of Mutasa's Social Vision in <i>Sekai Minda Tave Nayo</i>	309
5.6 A Summary of the Selected Fictional Works on the Second Phase of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme.....	312
5.7 General Overview of Gender and Land Ownership in all Selected Fictional Works	313

5.8 Conclusion.....	316
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	317
6.0 Introduction.....	317
6.1 Research Findings	318
6.2 Recommendations.....	326
6.2.1 Recommendations for Future Research.....	326
6.2.2 Recommendations for Future Practice	327
REFERENCES.....	330
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	355
APPENDIX A.....	355
Interview Guide for Authors.....	355
Questionnaire Schedule for Academics and Critics of African Literature	357
APPENDIX C.....	361
Questionnaire Schedule for Publishers.....	361
APPENDIX D	364
Questionnaire Schedule for Readers.....	364

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention of Elimination of Discrimination against Women Jiangxi Province
DLA	Department of Land Affairs (South Africa)
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
HRS	Household Responsibility System
IDB	The Inter-American Development Bank
INCRA	National Institute for Colonisation and Land Reform
INRA	Instituto Nacionale deReforma Agraria
JSG	Soviet Government
LRAD	Land Redistribution for Agriculture Development
LSCF	Large Scale Commercial Farms
LUC	Land Use Certificates
MST	Landless Workers Movement
NCA	Narrative Critical Analysis
PETT	Special Land Titling and Cadastre Project
PLAS	State Purchase for Lease
PRC	People's Republic of China
PROCEDE	Program for the Certification of <i>Ejido</i> Land Rights and the Titling of Urban
SSCF	Small Scale Commercial Farms
SLAG	Settlement Land Reform Grant
TTLs	Tribal Trust Lands
WAG	Women's Action Group
WLLG	Women and Land Lobby Group

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Land remains an emotionally debated resource in many post-colonial countries that are predominantly agro-based (Moyo, 1995). Land-based livelihoods are still significant in improving both the rural and urban people's economic and social status (Moyo, 1995; Zvidenga-Nyawo-Viriri-Shava, 2012). The importance of land based livelihoods explains why colonial settlers had to put a number of repressive laws that enabled them to dispossess blacks of their prime land and dump them to barren areas that were not suitable for human habitation. The fact that land still forms the basis of many people's livelihoods is a known fact which is not contestable.

In Africa most systems of customary law do not allow women to own or inherit land in their own individual right (Gaidzanwa, 1988; Mvududu, 2000). They can only access it through their fathers, sons, uncles or husbands; and that was the case in Zimbabwe before the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) which has also allowed women to access land in their own individual capacity. It is imperative to note that in discussing gender and land and the concept of headship in Zimbabwean society, men are always considered to be the head of the family and land is allocated to the head of the family who is presumed to be male. This means that women's access to resources like land is limited (Mafa, Gudhlanga, Manyeruke, Matavire & Mpofu, 2015). There are also female-headed households and some of these households have always found it very difficult to access land (Gaidzanwa, 1988). This research therefore demonstrates that the issue of land and gender is a contested terrain which often disadvantages women due to a number of other related factors that have subordinated them. Usufruct or user rights to land are the most common feature. Most Southern African societies have a patrilineal system in which land tenure is most frequently in the hands of males and generally the eldest son or uncle inherits land. It is only in exceptional cases, if there is no husband's brother or son to inherit the land that widows remain overseeing the land left by their deceased husbands on behalf of their male children until they come of age and eventually get married. This is only possible if the widow remains in the family and if

they had children with the deceased husband (Mvududu, 2000; Gaidzanwa, 1994; Goebel, 2005a, Goebel, 2005b).

Colonialism did not make this better off for the African woman, for it connived in crafting laws that continued to disinherit women from the land. In Zimbabwe, colonial laws like the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 which dispossessed the black man of the land he previously owned and further marginalised the black woman who was taken to be a minor and hence could not access land among other resources. With the introduction of codified customary law in colonial Rhodesia, women were stripped of the rights they had previously enjoyed in traditional society. Throughout the colonial period Shona and Ndebele women shared the same status with children, for their whole lives, irrespective of their education, finances or marital status. Colonial society treated black women as minors. The black people of Zimbabwe had to wage the liberation struggle in order to reclaim the land which was taken away from them by the colonial settlers (Tshuma, 1997; Mafa, et. al. 2015).

At independence Zimbabwe inherited a racially skewed land distribution pattern which was in favour of whites (Tshuma, 1997; Moyana, 2002). Land was disproportionately shared between 6000 large scale white commercial farmers, owning 47% of the land, 800 000 communal farm families (blacks) controlling about 49% and 8500 small-scale commercial farmers (blacks) controlling 4% of total agricultural land (Vudzijena, 1998). The newly independent state had to embark on a land reform programme to redress the colonially induced racial and gender imbalances in land ownership. The first phase of the land reform programme which was informed by market-based approaches took place from 1980-1998 (Vudzijena, 1998; Kinsey, 1999; Moyo & Yeros, 2005; Moyo, 2006). It did not yield much and hence in 2001 the government had to embark on the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) which accelerated the land redistribution exercise. Women have been disadvantaged in both phases of the resettlement programme (Gaidzanwa, 1991, Mvududu, 2000; Goebel, 2005; Manjengwa & Mazhawidza, 2009a, 2009b; Mafa, et. al. 2015).

It is against this historical background that this research discusses Shona literature's treatment of gender and land ownership. The reason why conflicts ensued between blacks and whites (as stated earlier on) was for blacks to reclaim their birth right which is the land. Land therefore is a very important resource which people cannot do without. The importance of land as a resource dates back to pre-colonial times and even the conflicts that dealt with land issues started long back. Literature is shaped by the environment from which it emerges and Shona fiction is no exception. Consequently, the portrayal of gender and land ownership in some selected Shona fiction is investigated. Understanding the gender and land ownership in Shona fiction might even give lessons to the current land conflicts in Zimbabwe and might assist in policy formulation which would resultantly enable communities to come up with possible intervention strategies regarding racial and gender justice in land ownership in Zimbabwe in particular and the world in general.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Earlier research on Shona fiction has focused on factors that influenced the development of Shona literature (Chiwome, 1996, 2002), the classification of Shona fiction into old world and new world (Kahari, 1986, 1990, Veit-Wild, 1992) and Shona literature's treatment of socio-economic issues in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence periods (Makaudze, 2010). No specific work on the criticism of Shona literature has focused on gender and land ownership and yet this is a critical aspect of any community's life. Literature mirrors real life history and hence no criticism of Shona literature has focused specifically on the important aspect of land ownership and gender. Those that have discussed the question of land in Shona fiction (Vambe, 2006) left out the gender aspect; and those who included it (Gudhlanga & Chirimuuta, 2012) have only discussed *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005) reflecting the second phase of the agrarian reform in Zimbabwe and yet gender and land issues have always been central in Zimbabwean history. Mvududu (2000) has noted that women constitute 60% - 80% of farmers on the continent, yet most literature on land tends to leave them out. With this background in mind, the present researcher seeks to investigate Shona fiction's portrayal of gender and land ownership. The research therefore unravels the relationship of men and women within the context of land and how it hinges on the economic liberalisation of both genders and ultimately the development of the nation at large.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The main aim of this research is to analyse selected Shona fiction's portrayal of men and women and how they relate to land. The study focuses on selected Shona fiction set in the pre-colonial period right up to the present day and how it presents gender and land ownership. It envisages highlighting if Shona fiction is a true reflection of real life or if it falls in the same trap as other literature on land ownership which seems to ignore women.

1.3 Objectives

This study seeks to:

- investigate Shona fiction's portrayal of gender and land ownership.
- trace the historical processes of land politics and gender.
- explore Shona fiction's portrayal of past, present, future challenges and opportunities in relation to land-based livelihoods of both genders.
- explore the various theoretical standings that inform the gender discourse in relation to land ownership in Shona fiction.
- interrogate Shona fiction's ability to resolve the current conflict of access to land by race and gender.

1.4 Research Questions

- How does Shona fiction portray gender and land ownership?
- What historical factors have influenced gender and land ownership?
- Is Shona fiction a typical reflection of the historical processes of gender and land ownership?
- What are the various theoretical standings that inform the gender discourse in relation to land ownership in Shona fiction?
- Is Shona fiction able to present a solution to the current conflict of access to land by race and gender?

1.5 Justification

It is important to carry out this research for there is inadequate critical analysis of literature on gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. It is also necessary to investigate how writers of Shona fiction depict female and male characters and their relationship to land ownership. While a lot of research has been done on the factors that underdeveloped Shona fiction (Chiwome, 1996; 2002), categorising Shona fiction into old and new world novels (Kahari, 1986; 1990), there has been very little on gender and land ownership in Shona fiction (Vambe, 2006; Gudhlanga & Chirimuuta, 2012). The reason why the land issue was not prominent in Shona fiction can be accounted for by various factors which include the politics of the time and censorship of the Literature Bureau which determined the type of literature that was published. To add to this, written works outside Shona fiction regarding land ownership in Zimbabwe (Moyo & Yeros, 2005; Goebel, 2005; Kinsey 1999; Rukuni, 2006) has focused on redressing historical injustices and in the process side-lined gender justice. Furthermore, research on Shona fiction on land has also only focused on the agrarian reform without tracing the underlying historical processes in as far as gender and land ownership are concerned. Additionally, there have been limited studies that explore the relationship between literature, gender and land-based livelihoods. The current study therefore attempts to bridge that gap.

It is also imperative to carry out this research on gender and land ownership in Shona fiction because some scholars like Mvududu (2000) have observed that African women contribute 60-80% of labour and management of food production in many parts of the continent but are conspicuously absent in land ownership discourse and schemes. It is therefore necessary to investigate Shona fiction's representation of experiences of farmers from both genders. The role of women has previously been confined to the provision of labour and were therefore not spoken about in terms of land ownership. An understanding of both genders' relation to land would assist Zimbabwe and other countries faced with gender disparities in land ownership. Consequently, lessons might be drawn from the Shona fictional experiences. Furthermore, policy makers in Zimbabwe stand to benefit from the findings "and in this way it would contribute towards a more permanent arrangement to learn continually from people and involve them in reforming the land tenure system" (Rukuni, 1994: 17).

The study also accords women the opportunity to be involved in the whole land and other resource ownership debate. Arguably, the feminisation of poverty in development literature is a well-documented discourse. It has been found out that female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households and that they also have less labour resources and fewer assets (Ellis, 2000). Once women are empowered and have the social and economic resources, the quality of life of their households improves. If the study vividly demonstrates that women contribute to the social well-being of families in particular, and communities in general, it is therefore necessary for policy makers to develop policies that enable communities to improve women's access to resources.

Discussing gender and land ownership in Shona fiction also helps to change the misrepresented image of Zimbabwe by the west. Most countries in the west have been quick to judge the seeming unruly and militant way in which Zimbabwe has handled the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. Understanding the historical processes that have resulted in the dispossession of the black people's land, the liberation struggle and the dictates of the Lancaster House Constitution are critical in redressing the land issue. Once this historical truth is clearly understood, it assists in finding solutions to the gender and land ownership question in Zimbabwe. Understanding the gender and land ownership discourse in Zimbabwe and how it can be amicably resolved would make valuable contributions towards some former settler colonies like South Africa that are slowly following in the footsteps of Zimbabwe in redressing the skewed land ownership patterns (Walker, 2003; 2011). Other African countries faced with land tenure challenges may draw lessons from the Zimbabwean experience.

1.6 A Brief Literature Review

The contested terrain of gender and land ownership is not unique to Zimbabwe but typical to most countries whose economies predominantly depend on agriculture. The neglect of women's land issues by the state is also a characteristic feature of other countries in different parts of the world. In South East Asia Agarwal (1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1998a, 1998b, 2002, 2003, 2010) has written extensively on how women have been marginalised in accessing land. Gender and land issues are a global challenge and the present research probes this contested terrain of human life in selected Shona fiction.

Tripp (2003) has vividly demonstrated the challenges that women's movements still face in Uganda, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania in fighting for women's access to land. Tripp (2003), notes that in Tanzania the Land Act of 1999 and the Village Land Act of 1999 ensures that women are represented in land administration and overrides customary law. However, the situation on the ground is that despite the provisions of these laws men are still refusing to give women land which they are equitably and legally entitled to. Similarly, in Mbale district of Uganda, Otim (1993) has observed that women only have user rights to land and in general property is handed down through male lineage. In South Africa the land reform which has taken three forms namely; restitution, redistribution and tenure reform has also disadvantaged both men and women of African descent. The primary goal of post-apartheid land reform has been to de-racialise land ownership in the commercial farming areas without necessarily appreciating the aspects of both gender and class (Walker, 2011).

In Zimbabwe as stated earlier on, many scholars who have critiqued Shona fiction have not discussed gender and land ownership. Kahari (1990, 1986) has focused mainly on the development of the Shona novel and categorised it into old and new world novels and how the Shona novel has either borrowed heavily from the folktale or the English novel. He has also demonstrated how western culture has destroyed African culture especially in urban areas which he sees as the moral deathbed of the African person's culture. He has also focused on discussing the works of art using the Fosterian view of putting emphasis on plots and characters among others without necessarily discussing the historical processes that affected the Shona people's land dispossession. The present research bridges that gap by discussing gender and historical processes such as land dispossession and ultimate condemnation of Africans into barren reserves and Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs).

Magocha and Makaudze (2010) discuss at length the novel *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* and how it has tried to empower the girl child through getting relevant education that would assist her in the day-to-day running of her society. They highlight the challenges, strengths and weaknesses of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. Furthermore, they discuss the major themes and characterisation of the novel, *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*. They, however, discuss

only the second phase of Zimbabwe's land reform and how it relates to gender issues. This research gives a holistic picture of the history of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe from pre-colonial times to date and demonstrates how Shona fiction handles this.

Gaidzanwa (1985) makes a significant contribution to the study of women characters in Shona, Ndebele and English novels. Gaidzanwa argues that images of women in Shona literature are stereotyped but she does not give reasons for this stereotypical portrayal of women. Furthermore, Gaidzanwa emphasises the fact that some women are left in rural areas while their husbands migrate to urban areas. She does not bother to discuss the historical circumstances that resulted in women tilling the land in rural areas in the absence of their husbands. This research discusses Shona fiction's treatment of the historical factors that condemn women to till barren land while their husbands have migrated to towns, farms or mining establishments.

Mashiri (1994) focuses on the portrayal of women in Shona novels. He considered the different social philosophies which shape the author's social vision of women characters. However, he does not discuss the traditional male and female relations in the pre-colonial society and the role played by imperial history in changing the perception of women into "rural-good" and "urban-bad." The present research unravels the role played by colonial domination in changing gender relations among the Shona people in relation to land ownership.

Veit-Wild (1992), traces the social history of Zimbabwean literature. She includes the biographies of the authors she has discussed. This is vital because it shows how a person's life influences his or her literary career which is a good starting point in criticism. However, Veit-Wild, like earlier scholars does not discuss how authors depict male and female characters' relation to the land ownership; a very vital resource which any country cannot do without in its social reproduction. The present research discusses selected Shona fiction's presentation of gender and land ownership from pre-colonial to post-independence periods. It gives a holistic picture of the gender and land ownership discourse in Zimbabwean history as portrayed in selected Shona fiction.

Chiwome (1996, 2002) discusses the factors that have underdeveloped Shona fiction from the mid-1950s to the 1980s. He highlights vividly how the Literature Bureau, Christian Education and tradition have censored Shona fiction. In instances where he discusses works like *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* (1967) Chiwome bemoans moral decadence and alcoholism instead of discussing the pertinent issue of land dispossession and the resultant displacement which forced the black man and woman seek alternative ways of survival on the highly exploitative commercial farm. In *Pafunge* (1972) Chiwome laments the effects of this displacement signified by malnourished children like Winnie whose parents live in an unproductive wasteland near Mharapara Mission. He, like earlier scholars, does not clearly capture how Christianity colluded with colonialism to dispossess both men and women of their land which they previously collectively owned. The present research investigates how the colonial laws have been pivotal in disinheriting black men and women thereby reducing them to servitude at the hands of white colonial landowners at commercial farms. The apportioned black people's areas, the reserves, were not only unproductive but were disease infested with tsetse flies and mosquitoes.

Magosvongwe (2013) discourses land and identity in the post-2000 fictional narratives in English written by both black and white Zimbabweans. She establishes that the Lancaster House Constitution did not give land rights to black Zimbabweans after independence but perpetuated white ownership of land. She further avers that the indigenous people had to take it upon themselves to regain the lost land and identity through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP). Magosvongwe observes that the white fictional writers portray the FTLRP as a violent exercise which disposed the legal white occupants of their rightful land. She discerns that conversely, the black fictional writers depict the FTLRP as a justified exercise which enabled indigenous black Zimbabweans to regain their lost land. Magosvongwe further establishes the continued disharmony between black and white races in the works she analyses. She proposes that both white and black Zimbabweans should work together for the greater common good which would enable both races to live harmoniously in Zimbabwe. She calls for reconciliation between the two races. However, the main weakness in Magosvongwe's thesis is that even though she discusses the depiction of the FTLRP in post-2000 fictional narratives written in English, she does not critique literary works written

in indigenous languages. Furthermore, like earlier critics of fiction referred to, she does not discuss gender and land ownership. The present study therefore endeavours to discuss gender and land ownership in Shona fictional works to decipher how writers of fiction in indigenous languages depict such an enduringly thorny issue in Zimbabwe.

Pongweni (1990) discusses the use of metaphors, similes and idiophones in Zvarevashe, Chakaipa and Mungoshi's novels. No reference is made to dispossession of land or the condemnation of black men and women to arid areas, an issue which is brought out in Mungoshi's *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva* (1975). Blacks in *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva* were only allowed to buy land in Native Purchase Areas and Pongweni is silent on this. Gender and land ownership aspect is absent from earlier critics of Shona fiction and yet it is an issue discussed in the novels critiqued. The present research bridges that gap by discussing at length how gender and land ownership are presented in selected Shona fiction.

Vambe (2006) gives a refreshing approach to the criticism of Shona fiction. He weaves in the land issue in his criticism of Shona fiction and discusses Mutswairo's *Feso* (1956), Choto's *Vavario* (1990) and Mutasa's *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005). He also states that many critics of Zimbabwean fiction leave out Shona fiction which "contains a wealth of discourse on the question of land" (Vambe, 2006: 265). The present research builds on Vambe's findings and interfaces the gender dimension in its analysis of Shona fiction's portrayal of land ownership.

Gudhlanga and Chirimuuta (2012) discuss gender and land reform in Zimbabwe's second phase of the agrarian reform. They demonstrate how *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* redresses gender justice which had been side-lined by earlier land reform in Zimbabwe which had mainly focused on addressing colonial racial imbalances in land ownership. Furthermore, they highlight the challenges of the Fast Track Land Reform and discuss the suggestions proffered by Mutasa in resolving the challenges of the FTLRP. They however, did not discuss gender and land ownership in Shona fiction set in the other historical periods. The present research discusses how Shona fiction depicts male and female characters in relation to land.

Gaidzanwa (1994) states that African women in pre-colonial times had access to land. She states that in traditional Zimbabwean society, access and rights to land were governed by customary law. Under customary law, land was not privately owned but communally owned and individually worked (or both) in order to cultivate food crops for domestic use. Married women obtained land for farming through their marriage ties as wives and in this way, they had access to land. Unmarried and divorced women were accessed land in their mothers' fields to grow crops and amass some stock in preparation for marriage or for livelihood in the case of divorced women. They were given land by their mothers and not allocated by the community or chief. Gaidzanwa further states that the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 reduced the rights on the land that both men and women used to enjoy. Since there was competition for land after the passing of these Acts, women who used to have access to land to grow their crops lost those rights they used to enjoy in pre-colonial times. Similarly men in a colonial context also lost access to fertile land. The present research demonstrates how writers of selected Shona fiction understand these historical processes that mediated against indigenous men and women's access to land in colonial Zimbabwe.

Moyo (1995a) traces the history of gender and land issues in Zimbabwe. He argues that while women in pre-colonial times had access to land which was owned communally, women in colonial times did not enjoy such rights. He states that the Land Husbandry Act also brought in additional labour allocations for women but imposed restrictions on land use rights. Moyo (1995a, 1995b) further states that Africans were tasked to practice soil conservation measures by the new colonial settlers. This resulted in too much policing of women's agricultural activities because prohibitions against using stream banks, *dambos* and vleis, also meant that women were the most directly deprived and policed, since they are the ones who cultivated vegetable gardens in such areas. Thus overtime, women's land rights had been relegated to smaller wetland areas as men dominated arable fields and grazing land.

Moyo (1995a, 1995b) further observes that colonialism also introduced what they called Native Purchase Areas where black men could buy and own land under freehold tenure. Black women could not purchase land in Native Purchase Areas but had access to such land through their male kin. At the same time the colonial laws forbade women from owning land

and considered them to be second-class citizens who were supposed to be under the leadership of male figureheads. Moyo (1995a) added that even in post-independent Zimbabwe women continued to be marginalised in terms of access to and ownership of land. He states that the post-independent state had communal lands, commercial lands and even safaris in which women had no access except providing cheap labour. This present research endeavours to see if Shona fiction on gender and land understands these historical nuances in the debate on gender and land ownership.

Zvidenga-Nyawo-Viriri-Shava (2012) compares the colonial legislation that resulted in the condemnation of black people into dry and arid areas that were not fit for human habitation and plant growth while whites took all the fertile land for themselves. Of note she cites the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 in the then Rhodesia and the 1913 Natives land Act in South Africa as the main colonial legislations that stripped blacks of their fertile land. She then discusses the various land reform processes in both countries that have tried to address black people's land dispossession by white people. She, however, does not focus on the gender aspect. The present research builds on Zvidenga-Viriri-Shava's findings and weaves in the gender in land ownership discourse with particular reference to Shona fiction.

Herbst (1990) states that the main reason why black people of Zimbabwe had to fight the war of liberation was the land issue. He demonstrates that when Zimbabwe got independent it was not easy for black people to take their land because of the dictates of the Lancaster House Constitution which emphasised the willing-seller and willing-buyer policy which was supposed to be followed by the newly independent government. The Government of Zimbabwe managed to buy some pieces of land which were lying fallow and were deemed fit to be sold by the white commercial farmers. Herbst emphasises that the land that the government got under the willing-seller willing-buyer policy was not the best since it got land that the white man least expected to utilise. This is the land which the Government of Zimbabwe used for resettling people in the first phase of the land reform programme from 1981-1990. Herbst however does not focus on gender justice and equity in land reform. The current research discusses selected Shona fiction's portrayal of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe.

Lahiff, (2003) has observed that the racial and gender inequalities in landholding still persists in most African countries, including those that have undertaken the land reform exercise. While the strategies for land reform may differ from country to country, a common theme of colonialism and racial imbalances in relation to land access and ownership has guided most land reform programmes. He further states that mobilisation around *Campanha Terra* in Mozambique in 1996-97, the occupation of commercial farms by war veterans and others in Zimbabwe and the growing militancy of the Landless People's Movement in South Africa in 2000 signify an important emerging phase of land politics in Southern Africa. The present research is guided by these findings and assesses Shona fiction's portrayal of such historical truths in the literature on gender and land ownership.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by *Africana Womanism* and *Afrocentricity*. It is necessary to ground the study in *Afro-centred* theoretical underpinnings that emanate from African culture and history. Such theories have Africa as the centre and therefore remove Africans from the periphery of critical discourses that have plagued most Eurocentric approaches. Such an approach is prudent in this study which focuses on gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction.

The study is informed by *Africana Womanism* theory. *Africana Womanism* was propounded by Cleonora Hudson-Weems (1993). The *Africana Womanist* theoretical paradigm advocates that African women and men are compatible and work together to liberate themselves from the evils of colonialism. She further affirms that the theory is not like feminism which is exclusionary and fights against men, but *Africana Womanism* includes all men and women of African descent in fighting against the challenges that the African community faces. The theory originates from an African historical and cultural context and “focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of African women” (Hudson-Weems, 2007: 82). *Africana Womanism* has an exceptional agenda true to the prioritisation of race, class, and gender (Hudson-Weems, 2007). Furthermore Hudson-Weems affirms that “The primary goal of *Africana* women then is to then is to create their own criteria for assessing their realities, both in thought and in action” (Hudson-Weems, 2004: 82). She further states that *Africana Womanism* is “family centred, not female centred, and it is first and foremost concerned with

race empowerment rather than female empowerment, which in reality, is a part of, not separate from, the holism of Africana life (Hudson Weems, 2007: 23). Hence this theory which understands that African women are under the three cards that militate against them namely race, gender and class helps in the understanding of Shona fiction's portrayal of gender and land ownership.

The study is also informed by the theory of Afrocentricity which was coined by Molefe Kete Asante (1980). Afrocentricity is a theory "which calls for all African phenomena, activities and way of life to be looked at and be given meaning from the standpoint and worldview of Africans" (Gray, 2001: 3, Asante in Hudson-Weems (ed), 2007: 29). Using Afrocentricity allows for an understanding of the male female relations and how they relate to land in an African way. Thus it is prudent that the understanding of male-female relations as they relate to the ownership of land be appreciated using Afrocentricity, a theory by, about and for Africans.

Both Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity guide the study in the understanding of the cultural and historical processes that have marginalised Zimbabwean men and women; and disadvantaged them in accessing resources like land. The theories also make it possible for one to understand the socio-economic processes at play in economic and social rights and view men and women as equal human beings who should access resources at the same level. Therefore, it is imperative to use such approaches in the endeavour to understand the discourse on gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean history as envisaged in Shona Fiction.

1.8 Research Methodology

The study is mainly qualitative in nature, drawing heavily from the Critical Narrative Analysis (Barone, 1992). The research design aims at bringing to the fore stories of how Shona fictional writers depict men and women's relations to land. Through the methodology of Narrative Critical Analysis (NCA) the study endeavours to document the historical processes that Shona fictional writers perceive as the factors that influence their portrayal of gender and land ownership.

The qualitative approach presents data through narrative description as opposed to quantitative which focuses on numbers. Narrative description enables the phenomenon to speak for itself. Selected Shona fiction which represent the different historical periods that Zimbabwe has gone through are the primary sources of this research. Focus is on how authors of Shona fiction depict gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe's different historical periods. A deeper understanding of the historical processes that were a result of colonial legislations such as the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and Land Husbandry Act (1951) have influenced men and women's relations to land. Through narrative description, the research also discusses the colonial Tribal Trust Lands, Reserves, Commercial farms (prazos), the war of liberation and the post-independence period and how they influenced men and women's ownership patterns of resources such as land. Fiction written in English such as Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950), Chinodya's *Harvest of Thorns* (1989), Hove's *Bones* (1988), Wilson Katiyo's *A Son of the Soil* (1976), among others, are for cross referencing purposes to bring to the fore gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean literature.

Historical and social science sources on land and gender were also used as a yardstick to measure whether Shona fiction in particular and Zimbabwean literature in general give a typical representation of gender and land ownership. Interviews were conducted with authors who have published fiction as well as distributing questionnaires to academics and critics of African fiction, publishers, as well as readers of Shona fiction. This was done in order to probe issues and extend the critical debate on gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe in general and in Zimbabwean literature in particular.

1.9 Scope of Study

The study critically analyses the portrayal of gender and land ownership in some selected Shona fiction namely; Solomon Mangwiro Mutswairo's *Feso* (1956), Patrick Chakaipa's *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* (1967), Thompson Kumbirai Tsodzo's *Pafunge* (1972), Aaron Chiundura Moyo's *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* (1985), Raymond Morgan Choto's *Vavariro* (1990) and Davie Mutasa's *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005). The research project is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is the introductory chapter. It presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, aim of the study, objectives, research questions, significance, research methodology and the scope of the research.

Chapter two is the literature review, which gives global, continental and regional overviews of gender and land ownership. It then narrows down to a historical overview of gender and land in Zimbabwean history. The chapter discusses the different colonial legislations that resulted in the dispossession of the African people's own land. The chapter also accounts for the reasons why blacks had to fight to regain their land, independence and the Lancaster House Conference as well as post-independence period characterised by unfulfilled promises. This chapter gives the historical background and is used as a yard stick against which to measure Shona fiction's portrayal of gender and land ownership.

Chapter three is a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework that informs the study. It gives a comprehensive discussion of the Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity theories which inform the study. Chapter four is the methodology that guides the study. It explores the qualitative research methodology, justifying the use of such a research design in the present research. It also discusses the sampling technique and the data collection methods of interviews, questionnaires and document analysis. The questionnaire and interview methods of data collection are used to probe gender and land ownership so as to concretise the debates raised in the content analysis of selected fictional texts.

Chapter five basically critiques the selected Shona fictional works as well as using the data from questionnaires and interviews to ascertain Shona fiction's portrayal of gender and land ownership. The chapter highlights how Shona fiction can never be dissociated from the environment from which it emerges through the informants' understanding of how colonialism and the way post-independence land reform programmes have influenced the current gender and land ownership debate; and how these are reflected in selected fiction. The chapter presents and discusses findings from selected texts on how fiction set in the different historical periods handles gender and land ownership. In the light of the findings from interviews and questionnaires the chapter is a critical interrogation of gender and the land ownership as presented in these selected Shona fictional works.

Chapter six is the conclusion and presents the summative conclusions on the major findings of the study. It also gives some recommendations for further research and practice on how future land reform should be handled.

1.10 Conclusion

The chapter has laid bare the major thrust of the study which is to critique selected Shona fiction's portrayal of gender and land ownership. It has highlighted the aims, objectives and the justification of carrying out such a study. It has also given a brief literature review on the subject matter. The chapter has emphasised the importance of carrying out such a study since earlier research on the criticism of Shona fiction has left out the issue of gender and land ownership and yet land still forms the basis of livelihoods to countries like Zimbabwe that still depend on agriculture. The research bridges that gap by highlighting Shona fiction's depiction of gender and land ownership.

1.11 Definition of Terms

Gender: A social distinction based on culturally conceived and learnt ideas about appropriate appearance, behaviour, and mental and emotional characteristics for males and females (Ferrante, 2003). Apart from Ferrante's understanding of gender, in this study, gender also refers to either the female or male person as they relate to land ownership. Gender relations are viewed in terms of land use and ownership in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Customary Land Tenure: Tsutomu (2007) defines this as a type of land ownership which is governed by the long-established beliefs and customs of a particular place or locale that the general law regards as a legal practice. For example, traditional forms of land ownership which are informed by African traditional beliefs and practices are customary tenure. In the study customary tenure refers to the collective type land ownership that was informed by traditional beliefs and customs. There was no legal individual title to land in this type of land ownership, for the land was collectively owned by the living, the dead and future generations.

However, to be noted is the fact that with the onslaught of colonialism, the customary laws which informed customary tenure were heavily engraved with Victorian values and hence affected the type of customary form of land ownership which deprived women of the rights they previously enjoyed in land ownership. Customary tenure informed by traditional customs and practices normally override statutory land tenure in as far as allocation of land by gender is concerned.

Statutory Tenure: Payne and Durant-Lasserve (2012) define this type of land tenure as the one which is informed by written laws, usually enacted by a legislative body and not indigenous to the community. Statutory laws are passed by executive agencies, and common law, or the law created by prior court decisions. In most African, Asian and Latin American countries discussed in this study statutory land tenure is normally overridden by customary tenure when it comes to allocation of land by gender, it is not enforceable.

Feminism: Ostergaard (1992) defines feminism as a movement and a set of beliefs that problematises gender inequality. She further attests that feminists believe that women have been subordinated through men's patriarchal power, variously expressed in different arenas. Feminists believe that women's condition is socially constructed and historically shaped rather than pre-ordained by God or nature (Ostergaard, 1992). They further argue that women's socially constructed position situates them on a shared ground enabling a group identity or gender consciousness sufficient to mobilise women for change.

Colonialism: Horvarth (2009) defines colonialism as a practice of acquiring full political and economic control over another country, occupying it with settlers and exploiting it economically. Mafa, et. al. (2015) state that Zimbabwe was colonised by the British from 12 September 1890. She was under colonial rule for close to a century and had to wage a protracted liberation struggle and got independence from colonial rule on 18 April 1980. The territory of Southern Rhodesia was initially referred to as Southern Zambezia but in 1895 the name Rhodesia was used to refer to the same country (Tshuma, 1997). In 1901 the name Southern Rhodesia was adopted but was dropped in 1964 after the break-up of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. From 1964 until 1979 the country was called Rhodesia. In 1979

the country was renamed Zimbabwe-Rhodesia until 18 April 1980 when the country got independence from Britain and was named the Republic of Zimbabwe (Moyana, 2002).

Land Apportionment: Refers to the sub-division of the colony of Southern Rhodesia by colonial settlers into six specified categories namely; native reserves, native areas, European area, undetermined area, forest area and unassigned area (Tshuma, 1997). The blacks were moved from arable land through the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 to live in native reserves and native areas that were barren and infested with tsetse flies whilst whites occupied large arable areas that were fit for human habitation and the practice of agriculture (Tshuma, 1997, Moyana, 2002).

Land Reform: These are measures designed to effect a more equitable distribution of agricultural land especially by formerly colonised states that inherited a racially skewed land distribution pattern in favour of whites (Tshuma, 1997; Moyana, 2002). Zimbabwe instituted a land reform programmes in order to correct the colonial injustices that had put three quarters of arable land among the minority white population and pushed black majority into barren and inhabitable areas.

Restitution: In its literal sense it refers to the restoration of something lost or stolen to its proper owner. It is reparation made by giving an equivalent or compensation for loss, damage, or injury caused; indemnification. In the discourse of land reform restitution refers to restoration of land or land rights previously taken away from indigenous populations by colonial settlers. The land would then be restored to its rightful owners in post-independence land reform programmes. In the South African land reform it refers to a type of land reform that was put in place by post-apartheid South Africa. It endeavoured to restore historic rights to land to those who had been dispossessed by the Native Land Act of 1913 (Lahiff, 2003; Hall & Cliffe, 2009). This act was a result of segregation and the apartheid system. In the South African context restitution beneficiaries could get their land back or the equivalent in cash. In instances where they get their land back they have to form Community Property Associations or Trusts in which their property will be transferred and registered. In this

research the term is used in both its literal sense and also in the contextualised sense of the South African land reform.

Fiction: Generally this is associated with prose (Cuddon, 1998). However, some events can be factual or historical but fictionalised to suit the genre. In this study the definition is broader, it covers all literature created from imagination and it includes drama texts as well.

Womanism: Refers to a theory coined by Walker (1996) which is based on the racial and gender-based oppression of black women, and other women of marginalised groups. It is a reaction to the realisation that “feminism” left out the viewpoints of Black women. It is a type of feminism that focuses mainly on improving the plight of black women, it is almost identical to “Black Feminism.”

Africana Womanism: this theory comes out of “the rich legacy of African womanhood ...with its own unique agenda true to the prioritisation of race, class, and gender. From its very historical and cultural context, it is family centred, not female centred, and it is first and foremost concerned with race empowerment rather than female empowerment, which in reality, is a part of, not separate from, the holism of Africana life” (Hudson-Weems, 2007: 23). It was propounded by Cleonora Hudson-Weems.

Afrocentricity: It is a paradigm which is founded on how African people should re-assert themselves in all spheres of life (Asante, 1980). It was founded by Molefe Kete Asante.

Ownership: Having possession of something, calling it one’s own. This should be distinguished from access which simply refers to a way or right to use something. Both men and women in African traditional society had access and not ownership of land. Ownership in pre-independence period was communally sanctioned while in colonial and post-independence periods, title deeds sanctioned titlement. In the traditional set-up land was owned by the ancestors and allocated to male household heads by chiefs for the benefit of the

whole family (Mafa, et.al. 2015). Thus in the traditional African culture there was no individual titling to land ownership but it was communally owned for it belonged to the dead (ancestors), the living and future generations. It was communally owned with no title deed. Traditionally accessing land was synonymous to owning it. Thus those family members who accessed certain portions of land collectively owned them as families.

Tribal Trust Lands: These came into effect after the Tribal Trust Lands (TTL) Act (1965). The Act was devised to change the name of the Native Reserves and create trustees for the land. High population densities on TTLs made them degraded 'homelands' (<http://www.gta.gov.za/Land%20Issues/factsheets.htm>).

Native Reserves: commonly referred to as 'reserves' - these were communal areas designated to black people (Tshuma, 1997). The areas comprised of dry areas with very low rainfall and poor soils such that no meaningful agriculture could be carried out there. Through the forced removals indigenous people were moved from prime areas and dumped to these low potential areas that were above all infested with tsetse flies.

Native Purchase Areas (African Purchase Area): Land set aside for black commercial farmers whose farming activities were at a smaller scale than those of white commercial farmers (Tshuma, 1997, Mafa, et.al. 2015).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of related literature on gender and land ownership in various regions of the world and then moves on to the country of study, Zimbabwe. It firstly examines global trends in relation to gender and land ownership before discussing Zimbabwe. It is important to note that the interface of gender and land ownership has been a neglected area in research on land in general. The area has received limited attention from scholars in developing countries. The issue of gender and land ownership has also been neglected in policies of various governments especially in the third world (Agarwal, 1994; 1998, 2003; FAO, 2007; Rao, 2011; Njaya, 2013; Mafa, et. al. 2015). This study therefore seeks to interrogate the importance of researching on this formerly neglected area and thus contributing to the growing literature. This chapter firstly gives a regional overview of land ownership in Asia, then Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and finally Zimbabwe. The selection of the literature reviewed was based on their availability to the researcher rather than any deliberate inclination of literature discussed in this chapter over the one that which is not mentioned. This explains why the continents of Europe, North America and Australasia were left out, the literature of these continents on gender and land ownership was not easily accessible to the researcher.

As already alluded to in the previous chapter, land remains an emotionally debated resource in many post-colonial countries that are predominantly agro-based like Zimbabwe (Moyo, 1995a, 1995b). Such countries depend on such land based livelihoods as fisheries, forestry, horticulture, domestic and subsistence sustenance, commercial and domestic and subsistence farming, and research on capacity building and poverty alleviation activities which in these countries are still important in improving both the rural and urban people's economic and social status (Moyo, 1995b, 2013). It can be concluded that in such countries land property is the best resource for poverty eradication rather than any other economic resource. Land therefore is not solely a productive asset and a source of material wealth but a source of security, status and recognition (Rao, 2011b: 1). It also plays an important role in ensuring prestige and power among those who own it (Jinnah, 2013). Even though land holds such an important aspect in people's lives, it can be noted that there has been some gender discrepancies in ownership of land across continents. Land ownership is usually biased

against women in the three sub continents of Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Women continue to be deprived of land rights in these societies starting from family level due to cultural constraints of the patriarchal mind set of such societies (Jinnah, 2013: 2). To add to the support of the gender discrepancies in land ownership, Agarwal states that:

Land defines social status and political power in the village and it structures relationships both within and outside the household. Yet for most women, effective rights in land remain elusive, even as their marital and kin support erodes and female headed households multiply (Agarwal, 1994: 1).

The patriarchal hierarchy of many societies in developing countries makes access to resources tilted in favour of male rather than female members of these societies (Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007: 3). Owing to the level of home management that involves women they require land more than men. This sufficiently demonstrates that even though women need the land more than their male counterparts they are marginalised when it comes to ownership of such critical resources like land.

2.1 An Overview of Gender and Land Ownership in Asia

Land ownership and distribution patterns in Asia's 48 countries are extremely diverse (Rao, 2011b). These include state ownership (Vietnam), ownership by peasant collectives (post-1978 China), private ownership (Philippines), owner cultivation and tenancy (or share cropping) (FAO cited in Njaya, 2013). In Asia there are also four major types of inheritance and land management systems relevant to women's rights to land (Rao, 2011b: 1). These include; the largely patriarchal South Asia where land is viewed as a private asset which is owned and acquired through inheritance down the male line; bilateral and multilateral South East Asia where land is a private asset and is acquired through customary inheritance systems; the communist and socialist states like China and Vietnam where land is owned by the state but individual households are granted user rights by local village committees; and the Central Asian states which are characterised by conflicts between centralised state institutions and private clan-based land management systems (Rao, 2011b: 1). Most of these land management systems recognise men as the household heads and therefore are biased against women in the control and ownership of land. The succeeding section will sample a few countries in Asia to demonstrate the diverse land management and ownership systems of this continent.

2.1.1 Gender and Land Ownership in India

India, like most developing countries, is governed by both statutory and customary law in its land management and ownership system. In India even though the constitution of the country does not discriminate against land ownership in terms of sex, caste, religion, race and level of education, in practice ownership of land is governed by personal inheritance laws that vary according to religion, most of which contain some discriminatory provisions in relation to women (Rao, 2011a: 214). This seems to be the general trend in most developing countries where what is written under statutory law is not enforced but what tends to prevail under the traditions and customs of the people in those respective societies.

Under the Hindu caste system, it is very difficult for women to inherit land in India, when compared to Muslim women who inherit land in India. Under Islamic law, women inherit half of their men's share yet in India they do not inherit an equal share with their male counterparts (Agarwal, 1998, 2003). Agarwal (1994, 1998, 2003) has given four arguments to justify why women need independent titles in land namely; welfare, efficiency, equality and empowerment. Under the welfare argument, Agarwal states that once women have rights in land, it reduces their risk of destitution and poverty. She affirms that:

Once women have independent ownership of economic resources, such as land, it results in improved welfare of the household. This has been supported by research on how men and women spend the income under their control; women normally use it for the benefit of the family while men use it on individual things like liquor and tobacco (Agarwal, 1998: 1460).

In addition, Agarwal states that children's nutrition tends to be more positively linked to the mother's access to resources. The risk of poverty and physical well-being of a woman and her children is dependent on her access to economic resources like land, not just access mediated through her male relatives. Agarwal further states that if women have ownership in land they would not be vulnerable after marital breakdown or widowhood; it increases their social standing and bargaining power (Agarwal, 1994, 1998, 2003).

Agarwal (1994a, 1994b, 1998, 2003) also postulates the efficiency argument in which she states that giving women titles in land would increase their efficiency. In instances where men out migrate to urban areas the women who remain taking care of the land will have

access to credit if they have titles to land and also, they would put all their energy towards producing a greater yield once the land is registered in their names. Thus land titles could both motivate and enable women to adopt improved agricultural technology. It would also have indirect benefits of reducing the out-migration of women to cities and also of the family members that depend on these women (Agarwal, 1994a, 1994b, 2003).

Finally, Agarwal (1994a, 1994b, 1998, 2003) gives the equality and empowerment argument. She affirms that giving women titles in land would enable them to have rights over productive resources which assist them in negotiating their way in the male dominated society. Equality in land rights would also act as an indicator of women's economic empowerment and as a facilitator in challenging gender inequalities in the social and political spheres. Agarwal (1994a, 1994b, 1998, 2003) has postulated the above four arguments as a way of justifying why it is necessary for women to have independent rights in land.

In India there are three main sources of arable land namely; the state, the family and the market (Agarwal, 2003). All these three sources discriminate against women. The state has instituted land reform programmes in India and it is important to note that all land reform programmes in India are male biased. They consider the male household head as the recipient of land (Agarwal, 2003: 198). This leaves the woman with no independent title to land for she is considered a spouse and dependent on her husband. In a family setup, the husband is considered as the cultivator and the woman (spouse) and minor children are all dependent on the male cultivator who has the right to get land under the government land reform programme (Agarwal, 2003: 198). However, an adult son is usually counted as a separate unit and is given additional land. Conversely, unmarried adult daughters are excluded from getting land (Agarwal, 2003; Rao, 2008, Rao, 2011a, 2011b). Mazumdar (cited in Agarwal, 2002) cites a group of women from West Bengal who asked their village council why they were also not getting land under the land reform programme. They asked, "Please go and ask the government why, when it distributes land, we do not get a title. Are we not peasants? If my husband throws me out, what is my security?" (Mazumdar cited in Agarwal, 2002: 2). This according to Agarwal (2002) demonstrates women's clear recognition that their families alone cannot guarantee them economic security, and therefore they need fields of their own

(Agarwal, 1994a). This adequately demonstrates that the state land reform programme in India discriminates against the girl child and the woman in getting land.

Land in India is also accessed through resettlement schemes; these also benefit males who are entitled to getting land under such initiatives. Agarwal (2003) cites the Sador Sorovar Project (in Gujarata, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra), the Tehri Project (Uttarakhand), the Upper Krishna Project (Orissa) in which the packages of all these resettlement projects for landed families were male biased. In all these resettlement schemes, land transfers were made to men alone and not women. A widow with an adult son is not considered as a household head, but as a dependent and is not entitled to land or house ownership (Agarwal, 2003). In the Sardo Sorower project, one woman asked the Bhatia, a researcher during a research visit as follows; “What about those of us who have only adult daughters?” (Bhatia cited in Agarwal, 2003: 199). This demonstrates that the government programmes of land reform and resettlements are still biased against women in India and continue to give preference to men.

Poverty alleviation programmes are other means of getting land in India. These programmes were initiated through the government of India’s Five Year Plans. Agarwal (1994b, 1995, 1998a, 2003; Rao, 2011a, 2011b) argues that the first five year plans paid no attention to women’s land claims. It was only in the 6th Five Year Plan (1980-1985) that the Government stated in a separate chapter on Women and Development that the Government of India was going to give joint titles to spouses in the distribution of land. This however was not reiterated in the 7th Five Year Plan (1985-1990). The 8th Five Year Plan took up the issue but in a limited way, “it recognized that sons and daughters should get equal shares in parental property, and directed governments to give 40% of ceiling surplus to women alone, and the rest jointly to both spouses” (Agarwal, 2003: 199). The directive to give surplus land to women alone and joint titles was not implemented and the 9th Five Year Plan (1997-2002) through the guidance of Bina Agarwal who was a member of the government steering committee fought for a section on gender and land rights. She states that at the end of the Five Year Plan nothing had been done such that the gap between the stated policy and its implementation remained wider (Agarwal, 2003).

Agarwal (1989) argues that even patrilineal societies' tendencies have permeated matrilineal societies such that women cannot inherit land even in matrilineal societies. Agarwal (1989 cited in Agarwal, 2003) also states that the Indian society is so male-dominated such that as a researcher she was challenged by a cabinet minister when she proposed that women were supposed to get titles in land. At a seminar attended by two cabinet ministers in 1989, the then minister of Agriculture confronted Agarwal after her presentation on promoting women's titles to land in India, "Are you suggesting that women should be given rights in land? What do women want? To break up the family?" (Agarwal, 2003: 200). What this minister was promulgating was the fact that women should remain landless because once they have access and control over land and other resources, their negotiating power would be increased and they would challenge men's superior positions in society. Even the joint titles would still be a source of marital conflict as one Bihari woman said, "For retaining the land we would be tied to the man, even if he beats us" (Agarwal, 2003: 200). Thus the system of land ownership in India still favours men and disadvantages women.

Land can also be accessed in India through family inheritance (Agarwal, 1998a, 1998b, 2003, 2010; FAO, 2007; Rao, 2008, Neetha, 2010; 2011a, 2011b). Women do not fare well in land inheritance. In a 1991 survey Agarwal notes that few women inherit land and even fewer effectively control it (Agarwal, 1998). Among those few who inherited land their names were not entered formally in the village land records, instead they were entered jointly with their adult sons. The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 recognises men as agnatic heirs with women coming low in the order of heirs (Agarwal, 1995). The Hindu Succession Act (HSA) of 1956 was revised in 2005 to remove gender discriminatory provisions and now provides both a daughter and a son equal entitlement to agricultural land (Rao, 2011a: 214). It is only a daughter who was unmarried during the time of the amendment who could inherit land (Rao, 2011a). Despite this new provision it is still difficult for women to inherit land. In practice women are still discriminated against under this HSA (The Lawyers' Collective cited in Rao, 2011a). This is still a barrier for women to inherit from family land. Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act of 1937 also still defines Muslim inheritance statutes in India which exclude agricultural land. Women under Muslim law can inherit half of a men's share but this excludes agricultural land. This results in women becoming destitute as widows or after divorce. Thus even the Muslim law which allows women to inherit half of the land that males inherit still excludes agricultural land which is a critical economic resource. Women are

allowed to inherit other types of land but not agricultural land which enables them to fend for the family.

Market purchases are another form in which land can be accessed in India. Most scholars argue that in India very limited land is available for sale and purchasing agricultural land is a limited option (Agarwal, 1994, 1998a, 2003; Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007; Rao, 2011a, 2011b). The market option also cannot compensate women who have been deprived of land ownership by both government transfers and inheritance options. The market continues to be a depriving factor because of the stiff competition in acquiring land between both sexes, and to make matters even worse women face more debilitating financial constraints (Agarwal, 1994, 1998a, 2003; Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007; Rao, 2011a, 2011b). Women have only managed to lease land or buy it collectively through the help of Non-Governmental Organisations, for example the Deccan Development Society in Andhra Pradesh has helped women to lease or purchase land collectively and they work collectively and pay the loan collectively (Agarwal, 2003; Rao, 2011b). Even in these collective farms, the women themselves are so entangled in their cultural beliefs to the extent that they bequeath their land to their sons, only those without sons would bequeath it to their daughters (Agarwal, 2003). Another system which allows women to access land is through sharecropping in India (Rao, 2011a: 221). Women who are involved in sharecropping only get 25% of the produce while the land owner who is presumably male gets 75%. This partial arrangement prevails, the only asset women possess is their labour which has led to such exploitative tendencies. The women invest in the bulk of the labourious input such as preparation of the fields right up to harvesting yet get a meagre quarter of the harvest.

It can be concluded that the various ways of accessing land in India namely the state (through its land reform and resettlement programmes), the market, the family (through inheritance) and sharecropping are male dominated institutions which clearly support men at the expense of women. Women in India find it difficult to have titles in land through both the statutory and customary institutions.

Most of the scholars who have discussed gender and land ownership in India have laid bare the challenges that women face in the different ways of accessing land in India. These scholars have however not discussed how such challenges are presented in fictional works of art. The present research examines how Zimbabwean fictional writers explore the hotly contested matter of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe.

2.1.2 Gender and Land Ownership in Bangladesh

Land ownership in Bangladesh is also gendered as in most countries in Asia. Sarwar, Islam and Monzoor (2007: 6) argue that “Women in Bangladesh are far behind men in basic human capabilities, they are less educated; their health status is low; they are discriminated against men in the wage market; they are less mobile; they are overburdened; and their work is undervalued.” This puts the Bangladeshi woman at the low spectrum of the ladder in any negotiations including land ownership. The succeeding section examines how Bangladeshi women fare in land ownership through the various processes of government allocated *khas* and *chars* land, inheritance of land by women, separation and divorce, and also through the commercialisation of agriculture.

Sarwar, Islam and Monzoor (2007) argue that in Bangladesh women like all citizens have legal right to purchase and own land but in practice this is not happening. If a Bangladeshi family purchases land a woman in that family has no legal ownership right unless her name appears on the deed of the land document. Families that were interviewed were shocked to imagine a woman’s name appearing on a land document for they said “there is no question of putting land in the mother’s name. Many said it had never crossed their minds that both spouses could be land owners” (Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007: 14). Very few women in Bangladesh own land, it is only those women who come from very rich families who bring the money upon marriage and purchase land who have a stake in land ownership. Statistics show that men own more than 96% of cultivated land in Bangladesh whilst women own only 4% (Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007). This is corroborated by Kieran, Sproule, Doss, Quisumbing and Kim (2015: 18), who affirm that Bangladeshi women account for only 3% of all agricultural land holders. Also, to be noted is the fact that plots owned by women are significantly smaller than those owned by men. Those jointly owned by men and women constitute about 2% of agricultural land (Kieran, et. al. 2015). This adequately shows the

discrepancy of land ownership in terms of gender in Bangladesh. Women in Bangladesh face numerous social and economic disparities which deter them from accessing land and other resources (Kieran, et. al. 2015).

Sarwar, Islam and Monzoor (2007) observed that the land reform Act of 1984 in Bangladesh has focused on women's land rights. Through this 1984 Act, for the first time the government of Bangladesh stipulated that the *khas*, land and non-agricultural land which was supposed to be distributed to the landless family was to be distributed equally between husband and wife. However, the distribution of such land was skewed against the poor and about 88% of cultivable land which was distributed between 1980 and 1986 went to wealthy and influential people, and only 12% went to the landless people. Among those few, women who got this land could not establish their land holding in the lands that were allocated to them due to religious, cultural and financial factors that militated against women (Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007). Consequently, even in instances when women could benefit from the little land that was allocated to them, they still lost out.

Also, the government of Bangladesh allocated *char* lands, these are fertile lands that come out of river beds. Bangladesh has five major rivers and there are also a lot of other *char* lands from smaller rivers (Riverine Chars in Bangladesh, cited in Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007). These *char* lands are very fertile and are desired by many for agricultural purposes for they contain alluvial soils which are very fertile for agriculture. The government allocates these to poor people. The ownership of such lands is controversial and results in a lot of violence as politically powerful men end up taking these *char* lands at the expense of poor people and women. Most *char* lands are in the hands of powerful men who even get the assistance of law enforcing agents like the police to evict weaker people. The landless women who have limited control of such lands fear confrontation necessary to establish control, and administrative hassles, including clandestine requirements of money needed for bribing to get allocation in their name (Riverine Chars in Bangladesh cited in Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007). Women in Bangladesh are therefore deprived of *char* lands which end up in the hands of men since these women do not have both the stamina and financial resources to engage into the often violent nature of the procedures that enable one to get land.

Another way of accessing land is through inheritance in Bangladesh, and the inheritance laws are governed by religion and social class (Agarwal, 2003; Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007; Kieran, et. al. 2015). The existing laws of inheritance, patriarchal values and social practices in Bangladeshi society are still inclined towards the consolidation of discriminatory attitudes (Jinnah, 2013). The social customs in Bangladesh dictate that the Muslim land holding class and the upper caste Hindu women never work in the fields even though the women have titles in land. It is the male members of the family that work on behalf of these women. In terms of inheritance under Muslim law, the women inherit half of the men's share. Although women can inherit land through Islamic law it is often general practice in Bangladesh that ethnic groups follow customary practice of passing all land to their sons and not daughters. More so, most Muslim and Hindu women sign away their inheritance rights to their brothers because they want to maintain good relations with their natal family, and besides they feel that they would have benefited from family property through the paying of dowry upon their marriages (Agarwal, 2003; Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007; Kieran, et. al. 2015). Over and above this, it is general belief that daughters who do not sign away their inheritance rights are bad or naughty and several mothers would not want their daughters to pressure their sons for a portion of the land (Agarwal, 2003, Islam & Monzoor, 2007; Kieran, et. al. 2015). The relinquishing of inheritance rights by daughters to their brothers demonstrates the limitations that Bangladeshi women encounter in exercising their property rights (Kieran et. al. 2015). In some families land is titled in the son's name even before the father's death as a way of preventing daughters, sisters, widows from claiming land rights (Agarwal, 2003; Sarwar, Islam & Monzoor, 2007). The customary system in Bangladesh does not really allow women to have titles in land as evidenced by the titling of the land in a son's name whilst the father is still alive.

Both Hindu and Muslim women when they are divorced or have separated from their husbands go back to their natal villages and they normally have no titles in land since they would have signed away these rights once they got married. Upon their return to their natal villages, they normally become destitute even when their brothers have land. Interestingly, these women end up working as labourers in their brothers' fields in order to earn a living. This fully demonstrates that women in Bangladesh really have difficulties in owning land; both the social and statutory laws militate against them such that they remain poor with no bargaining power since land ownership gives social status and class. Access of property for

women is still a distant goal in Bangladesh despite equality being enshrined in the statutes of the country (Rural Development Institute, 2009). Comparable to their counterparts in India, women in Bangladesh find it difficult to have titles in land through both the statutory and customary institutions.

The scholars cited in the preceding discussion on Bangladesh have demonstrated how inheritance, government land distribution, social customs and statutory law militate against women in land ownership. These scholars have not ventured into gender and land ownership in works of fiction. The present study, therefore, critically analyses the interface between lived experiences on gender and land ownership as reflected by the cited scholars; and their impact on gender and land ownership as depicted in selected fictional works in Zimbabwe. It also examines various fictional writers' responses to the contested terrain of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe.

2.1.3 Gender and Land Ownership in Vietnam

Vietnam was formerly a socialist republic in which land was owned by the state and collectively worked by peasants (Rao, 2011a, Agarwal, 2003; Njaya, 2013). In such a scenario both men and women did not have titles in land. However the transition of the state of Vietnam from a socialist to a market oriented economy through a process called Doi Moi has resulted in numerous agrarian changes since 1986 (Kieran, et. al. 2015). Scott, Belanger, Thi, and Thu Hong (2010) state that the shift from collective property models to quasi-privatisation of land has had significant implications for women's land rights. In the current set up the state owns land in Vietnam but through the 1988 land Law, households have been allowed to obtain Land Use Certificates (LUCs) granting them long term use rights (Spichiger, Broegaard, Pedersen, and Ravnborg, 2013). The 1993 Land Law expanded these rights to allow farmers to transfer, trade, bequeath rent and mortgage their LUCs. It also provided space for only one name to be written on the LUC which was of the household head, resulting in gender disparities in property rights (Menon, Rodgers & Kennedy, 2013). This meant that women's names were not entered on the LUCs. However, in 2001 and 2003 the Land Law in Vietnam required all documents registering family assets to include names of husband and wife (Vietnam Laws Online Database cited in Kieran, et. al. 2015). Moreover, the 1986 Law on Marriage and family revised in 2000, states that all assets that are

jointly owned must be registered jointly in the names of both spouses (FAO, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c). Despite all these provisions, women's land rights still remain limited due to inconsistent implementation and poor enforcement of these laws compounded by de facto discrimination (Menon, Rodgers, & Kennedy, 2013).

Thus despite the promulgation of these laws there are still differences in women and men's access and ownership of land. This is because customary rules, akin to other Asian country, still regulate ownership and inheritance rights as well as property disputes in areas where the state is incapable of administering state law are still prevalent (Phan, 2011). About 27% of the overall population has LUCs and in such cases men are more than twice as likely as women to have their name on the LUC (Kieran, et. al. 2015). This demonstrates the gender disparity in land access in Vietnam that consistently favours men (Kieran, et. al. 2015). Menon, et al. (2013) claim that the few women in Vietnam who have their names on the LUC confirm that they feel empowered by the current law in the possession of land than those whose names are not listed on the LUC. Some of the women also added that having their names on the LUC increased their social standing and enabled them to negotiate in every aspect of life both in the private and domestic spheres.

It can thus be concluded that Vietnam, like India and Bangladesh still discriminates against women in the ownership of land. Despite the 1993 land law, 2001 and 2003 government decrees and the 1986 law on marriage, women still find it hard to have their names listed on the LUC. This means that women in Vietnam still find it difficult to navigate the economic sphere if they do not have access to vital resources like land. Almost all the scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in Vietnam have demonstrated how customary law continues to override statutory law. They have also highlighted how progressive land laws that accommodate women in land ownership continue to have no place in the Vietnamese life. The works thus reviewed so far focused mainly on Vietnam and did not discuss Zimbabwe. These scholars also did not discuss how gender and land ownership is portrayed in works of fiction like novels, poetry and drama. The present study investigates how gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe is depicted by selected writers of Shona fictional works.

2.1.4 Gender and Land Ownership in China

China like most countries in Asia is also characterised by marginalisation of women in land ownership. A brief history of the country following the different historical epochs that the country has revolved through lays bare the fact that women are actually at the lower rung of the ladder in comparison to men when it comes to land ownership. Social traditions of the Chinese people (which have limited the degree to which women realise the benefits from legal reforms that were meant to increase women's welfare in terms of access to land) are largely responsible for the marginalisation of women (Duncan & Ping, 2001; Ho, 2005; Liaw, 2008; de la Rupelle, Quheng, Shi & Vendryer, 2008; Fry, 2011). According to Liaw (2008: 254) the place of women in the Confucian social order is governed by "three obediences (*san fu cong*), obedience to her father before marriage, her husband when married, and her son when widowed." Women are always under the guidance and tutelage of their male relatives and are therefore not expected to stand on their own, and consequently have dependent rights in land. These land rights are supposed to be mediated through their male relatives at every stage of a woman's life as has been clearly attested by the Confucian three obediences.

de la Rupelle, et. al. (2008) observe that between 1900 and 1949, women's involvement in agriculture in China was very limited. They further state that during this period women in many areas of China did not generally have the legal privileges to own, inherit or have the legal right to own land or any other property. Widows however could occasionally hold land on behalf of their sons until they reached adulthood. This means that they were no more than custodians of the land until their sons were old enough to take over the ownership of land. De la Rupelle, et. al. (2008) likewise argue that women similarly did not have legal rights to land within households, as wives or daughters. Rao (2011) correspondingly affirms that in pre-revolutionary China, women had no property rights, their fertility, labour and person constituted a form of property that was supposed to be exchanged at marriage. Compounded with this, was the patri-local marriage system which is still existent in China today, in which women leave their villages and join their husbands' villages. Their families therefore always treat them as strangers or passersby, who would eventually leave for their husband's place of abode thus denying them rights to land. Sons on the other hand were regarded as the rightful heirs to the land who had to remain in their natal village and inherit land and not daughters (Duncan & Ping, 2001; Liaw, 2008; de la Rupelle, et al. 2008; Fry, 2013). Divorce likewise

has worsened the plight of women who often went back to their natal village where they had no right to land.

Moreover, to be noted is the fact that during the pre-revolutionary China land was under the ownership of landlords who were male. In a bid to increase women's rights to land, the Jiangxi Province Soviet Government (JSG) came to power in the 1930s and introduced two pieces of legislation. Firstly, the JSG expropriated land from landlords in order to pass it on to women by granting women equal rights to land. Secondly, the JSG introduced the 1931 Marriage Regulations Act which enabled women the right to retain property upon divorce including the custody of the children (de la Rupelle, et. al. 2008). However, these pieces of legislation did not do much in increasing women's access to land because of the traditional customs alluded to earlier on. The social customs took precedence over the pieces of legislation and they predominantly govern land and ownership rights in rural China. Unfortunately, the JSG was removed from power after a civil war by the Communist Party (Ho, 2005; Liaw, 2008; Fray, 2011). The removal of the JSG from power had adverse effects on women's land ownership rights. It derailed the strides that had been achieved in land rights for women because a government which promoted women's land ownership rights was no longer in power.

The year 1950 saw a further change in statutes when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was formed (de la Rupelle, et al. 2008). The new PRC government introduced the Marriage Act of 1950 and the Agrarian Reform Law of June 1950 which granted women legal rights to access land on an equal basis with men (Duncan & Ping, 200: 6). The new government further introduced collectivisation which gained momentum from 1958-1960. Under the collectivisation programme land was managed by village collective management committees and it was allocated to collectives. Of importance to note is the fact that the leaders of these collectives were mainly male. Even though women had equal right to receive land under the collective system, in actual fact they did not due to socio-cultural traditions (Duncan & Ping, 2001: 6). The statutes that were introduced by the PRC government that gave women equal access to land were overridden by tradition which did not give women such rights.

Another wave of change came when the PRC government stopped collectivisation. It was that in order for peasants to be more productive on the farms, land was not effectively managed under the collectivisation system. In 1978 the government introduced the Household Responsibility System (HRS) which was implemented in 1979 (Duncan & Ping, 2001). Under the HRS system which is still existent in rural China today, land use rights and obligations to pay state agricultural taxes and collective dues were no longer a responsibility of the collectives but were contracted directly to households which were given an incentive to keep any surplus production (Duncan & Ping, 2001). The HRS also give households 30 year leases and thereby placing more power to the household but this has not translated into women's access to and ownership of land. This is because the leases are drawn in the name of the household head who is presumed to be male (Fry, 2011). The HRS model is believed to be more efficient than the collective model. Nevertheless throughout it is evident that the collectivised period and the implementation of the HRS women continued to be marginalised (Duncan & Ping, 2001; Ho, 2005; Liaw, 2008; de la Rupelle, et al. 2008; Fry, 2013). Women therefore continue to be marginalised in land ownership in China.

Most scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in China have exhibited how women continue to be marginalised in land ownership throughout the different historical periods that China has gone through. They have demonstrated that there were a number of factors that militated and continue to marginalise against women in land ownership under the feudal, pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary China. Additionally, scholars have also demonstrated how statutory laws which are pro-women in land ownership are overridden by customary law which promotes male land ownership in China at the expense of women. All the scholars who have researched on China reviewed in this study did not discuss gender and land ownership in literature; they did not go further to see how these lived identities are portrayed by writers of fiction. The present study examines how literary voices portray gender and land ownership in selected works of fiction in Zimbabwe. Since gender disparity in land ownership is a global challenge the present study examines the fictional writers' solutions to this global challenge.

2.1.5 Gender and Land Ownership in Pakistan

Before 1947 Pakistan and Bangladesh used to be part of India and these two combined countries broke away from India as West Pakistan. However, the newly formed country had some serious grievances against the East wing of the country which remained unaddressed and resulted in the East wing declaring independence from West Pakistan forming two countries of Bangladesh and Pakistan in 1971 (Brohi, 2010). The land tenure inherited by West Pakistan in 1947 was in so many ways a synergy of the structural relationships that permitted economic and social exploitation of tenant by landlord prevalent in India (Naqin, Khan & Ghaffar, 1987). Pakistan, therefore inherited feudal system from India under which the landlords were mainly males and not females which meant that women did not have landed property. The major attributes of the land system in Pakistan at the time of independence were concentration of land ownership; absentee landlordism; insecurity of tenure of agricultural workers, share cropping in kind with levies and perquisites (Naqin, et. al. 1987). This meant that women could as the major land tenure system in Pakistan was dominated by men.

In 1937 however, the Muslim League had passed a law which allowed women to inherit land under Sharia Law. The Islamic Law of the country allowed women to inherit land, whereas the law that governed the country at that time did not allow women to inherit agricultural land. To gain this right the women advocated that Islamic Law should be declared unconditionally in Pakistan (Brohi, 2010). Of note is the fact that Islamic law does not allow women to inherit land with men on an equal basis but women normally get half of men's share. Despite this law, however, there is no published evidence that any land was distributed to women in Pakistan (Brohi, 2010). This is because of the socio-cultural values looming large and which continuing to marginalise women. In Pakistan in a similar fashion to other Asian countries that have already been discussed, women's relationship with the land is mediated through their male relatives. Married women access land through their husbands, daughters through their fathers, and widows through their sons or in-laws. Women in Pakistan forgo their right to inherit property in favour of their brothers. These relationships with men are supposed to be kept sound because they become social safety nets in times of divorce and widowhood (Brohi, 2010). This means that very few isolated women can access land through the open market while poor women in Pakistan fail to do so because they do not

have the money or access to credit through the banks for that purpose. Land ownership in Pakistan today still favours men at the expense of women.

Naqin, et. al. (1987) and Brohi (2010) have traced the discrepancies of gender and land ownership in Pakistan from the time the country was still part of India until such a time when it became an independent country. They further demonstrate that throughout the different historical periods women have found it difficult to access and own land in Pakistan. The reviewed scholars did not discuss how gender and land ownership is portrayed in literature. The present study therefore examines how such lived realities of gender and land ownership are depicted in literature. This is because literature is a mirror of society and can never be dissociated from the environment from which it emerges. The study brings to the fore the fictional works as representations of emerging perspectives of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean history.

2.1.6 Gender and Land Ownership in Philippines

Philippines like most Asian countries also has unequal land ownership between men and women. Njaya (2013:60) observes that:

Philippines had a long history of agrarian reform programmes. He singles out the Agrarian Reform Law of 1988 which provided for a comprehensive land redistribution programme in which women rural labourers had equal rights to own land and to participate in advisory and decision-making bodies.

However, Njaya (2013) is quick to note that the selection of beneficiaries disadvantaged women. This is because at the top of the priority list of beneficiaries were agricultural lessees and share tenants (who were mostly men) while permanent farm labourers ranked second; and seasonal farm workers who were mostly women ranked third (FAO, 2007; Njaya, 2013). Such a scenario amply demonstrates that despite the law having provided for equal access to land between men and women, the actual implementation of land reform exercise in Philippines favoured men at the expense of women because the first and second preferences of beneficiaries were mostly men. Women were at the bottom of the ladder in terms of preferred beneficiaries. Their marginalisation also, like in any other Asian country was a result of sociocultural traditions which gave more preference to the son to become an heir rather than the wife or the daughter. These new laws always failed when it comes to the

implementation stage because they are always superseded by the socio-cultural traditions of the different ethnic groups. What happened in Philippines is not unique to that country but seems to permeate all Asian countries that have been sampled for this study.

Scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in Philippines that have been sampled for this study (FAO, 2007; Njaya, 2013) have demonstrated how statutory law has been overridden by customary law when it comes to the implementation stage of accessing crucial resources like land. They also underscore the fact that in the agrarian reform of Philippines men ranked high on the list of beneficiaries and women were at the bottom of the ladder on the list of beneficiaries, a situation which did not improve women's access to resources like land. However, these scholars did not interrogate alternative representations of gender and land ownership in literature. The current study examines how other forms of writing, fictional works in this case, depict gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. It endeavours to accentuate how historical realities of gender and land ownership are depicted in fiction; and possibly tap from the solutions presented by the writers of fiction on how the gender and land ownership debate can be resolved.

2.1.7 Summary on Gender and Land Ownership in Asia

From the discussion of the sampled scholars who have discussed gender and land ownership in selected Asian countries it can be noted that they have highlighted that despite the provision of legislation and policy frameworks that ensure equal rights to men and women, access to landed property is still shaped by the persistence of social norms and values, marital and inheritance patterns, and religious practices mostly that favour men and discriminate against women. They further accentuate that entrenched customary norms and patriarchal culture prevents women from gaining direct land rights in the sampled countries. Furthermore, they indicated that religions like Confucianism, Hinduism and Islam work in cahoots with patriarchal traditions and continue to sideline women when it comes to ownership of property including land (Agarwal, 1994a, 1994b, 1998a; 1998b, 2010; Chen & Summerfield, 2007; Belanger & Li, 2009; Rao, 2010, 2011a; 2011b; Njaya, 2013). These scholars also aver that despite almost equal ownership rights in the constitutions of most Asian countries, women are still marginalised from land ownership. This is because male offspring preference in land inheritance and ownership still remains very strong in India,

Pakistan, China, Vietnam and Bangladesh. All the sampled scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in Asia did not discuss the portrayal of gender and land ownership in novels. The present study takes the gender and land ownership debate beyond historical and sociological works. It examines how a hotly contested issue of gender and land ownership is depicted by writers of selected fictional works in Zimbabwe with a view of promoting gender equity in access and ownership of resources like land.

After discussing gender and land ownership in Asia, it is necessary to see how men and women fare in terms of land ownership in Latin America.

2.2 An Overview of Gender and Land Ownership in Latin-America

The gender distribution of land ownership in Latin America is extremely unequal with women hardly representing more than 25% of land owners (Deere & Leone, 2001a, 2001b, 2003). Just like in Asia, in Latin America men are highly favoured in almost all forms of land acquisition (Deere & Leon, 2003; Castellanos, 2010). The different forms of land acquisition in Latin America include; government or community initiated land distribution programmes, the market and inheritance. Latin America was once a colony and land ownership during that time was dictated by the colonial settlers who parcelled out large tracks of land for their own benefit disadvantaging the indigenous populations, men and women included. Just like in Asian countries that were colonised and reviewed in the previous section, prime land was taken by the colonial settlers at the expense of the indigenous population. Indigenous men and women were deprived of their prime land which they formerly enjoyed before the onslaught of colonialism.

Almost all the 19 Latin American countries have had a history of land dispossession by their colonial masters who created a dualistic land tenure system where the colonial masters controlled large tracks of land which they had expropriated from indigenous populations for commercial agriculture (*latifundio-minifundio*). These Latin American countries started land reform a long ago to try and redress the land ownership imbalances which deprived both men and women of the prime land they owned before colonialism. In Mexico land reform started as early as 1917 and in Bolivia in the 1950s (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2009; Castellanos, 2010).

Despite the fact that Latin America has had a very long history of agrarian reform aimed at eliminating the great land concentration and the dualistic *latifundio-minifundio* land tenure systems, women in most cases rarely own and administer land due to legal and social cultural constraints (FAO cited in Njaya, 2013: 63). Most of the agrarian reforms in Latin America targeted household heads and permanent agricultural workers who were in formal employment. These household heads and permanent agricultural workers who were in formal employment in Latin America largely comprised of men (Njaya, 2013). In cases where women were involved in agriculture they were primarily employed as seasonal and temporary workers for they lacked a number of the requisite documentation like identity cards which would enable them to become permanent workers. Women could not easily acquire identity cards because they did not have the financial resources to travel to major cities to get the documentation. This was a discriminatory factor that marginalised women in most land reform activities which segregated them by the main criteria used of requisite documentation and male household head.

There is a lot of evidence from Latin American countries which attest that a very small percentage of women benefited from land redistribution programmes. The percentage of women land reform beneficiaries range between 4 and 15% in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru (Njaya, 2013). Deere and Leon (cited in Njaya, 2013) also concur with the fact that there are very few women land reform beneficiaries. They affirm that female land owners range from 12% in Brazil and 27% in Paraguay. According to FAO (cited in Njaya, 2013) only a few countries like Cuba and Nicaragua have women as direct land reform beneficiaries. This is because in Nicaragua the Agrarian Reform Act of 1981 did not use the household head as the main criterion for land allocation. This Agrarian Reform Act in Nicaragua precisely recognised women as direct beneficiaries of the land reform programme regardless of their family status (FAO cited in Njaya, 2013). Nevertheless, the main means for land acquisition in most Latin America is through inheritance which habitually prefers male inheritors to female ones. The other forms of land acquisition in Latin America are through government and community initiated land redistribution programmes, and market purchases, yet these are all biased against women (Deere & Leon cited in Njaya, 2013). Such biased forms of land acquisition resulted in unequal land ownership between men and women in Latin America. The succeeding section

will sample a few countries in Latin America to lay bare the unequal land ownership by gender.

2.2.1 Gender and Land Ownership in Bolivia

Bolivia like most formerly colonised countries is governed by both statutory and customary laws. These two sets of laws also dictate the ownership of land in Bolivia. Generally land ownership in Bolivia is heavily biased towards men who are favoured by traditional customs, government and community initiated land distribution programmes, and market purchases (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009; USAID, 2010).

The traditional customs in Bolivia militate against women's right to own land (USAID, 2010). Lastarria-Cornhiel (2009: 195) states that, "Patrilineal kinship, patrilocal marriage and residency patterns, and inheritance practices ensure that men maintain control over land and its resources and women as daughters, wives, or sisters are excluded." Such traditional customs reveal how land rights are allocated and distributed in Bolivia. These customs exclude women from owning and controlling land and in a way consigning them to second class citizens.

Inheritance systems in Bolivia favour the male child as compared to the girl child. Lastarria-Cornhiel (2007, 2009) argues that the inheritance of land usually passes from the father to sons although widows are allowed to remain on the property. Despite widows remaining on the property, they have no right to land ownership. The inheritance system also prefers their sons and not their daughters to take over land. To add to this, surviving spouses, widows to be precise, customarily do not inherit from their husbands in Bolivia (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009; USAID, 2010). Yet the same inheritance laws allow daughters in Bolivia to inherit household goods, animals, cash or a house, and not land which is a preserve of the male line (Deere & Leon, 2003; Castellanos, 2010; Njaya, 2013). Likewise, the Luso-Hispanic tradition inheritance favours the youngest son who is presumed to look after the parents in old age (Carneiro, de Freitas & Guedes cited in Deere & Leon, 2003). This adequately validates that inheritance laws in Bolivia do not favour women in as far as land ownership is concerned.

As stated earlier on, Bolivia is governed by both statutory and customary laws. Under statutory law, women are legally able to own land in Bolivia. Lastarria-Cornhiel (2009: 220) opines that “Bolivia’s formal legal system recognises equal rights for both women and men including the right to own property, to inherit land and to marital property.” This is enough evidence that statutory law theoretically allows women to own property including land. However when, the implementation of land distribution programmes took place in Bolivia women were marginalised, they could not equally enjoy the benefits of land ownership as enshrined in the constitution of the Government of Bolivia, the Family code and the 1997 Land Law (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2009).

In the 1950s Bolivia started a land distribution programme in which indigenous people benefited from the formerly dispossessed *latifundios-minifundios*. The land was redistributed to indigenous populations as a way of redressing the historical imbalances that Bolivia had experienced. In 1953 Bolivia inaugurated a land agrarian reform law which stated that, “All Bolivian farmers of 18 years and older, regardless of sex, were entitled to benefit from agrarian reform and land settlement programmes” (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2009: 220). Even though the agrarian reform law of 1953 clearly stated that all persons above 18 were supposed to benefit from the land reform, in practice that is not what transpired. Lastarria-Cornhiel (2009) states that the only women who received land were single female heads of households such as widows with small children. This is because the land reform targeted mainly household heads who were mainly male. Despite the negative discrimination against women in the land reform programme, 17% of the land reform beneficiaries between 1956 and 1994 were women (Castellanos, 2010). This is a very small number considering the fact that women constitute 52% of the world’s population; and 31% of household heads in Bolivia (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009; Castellanos, 2010; USAID, 2010). Even though women constitute more than half of the world’s population and 31% of Bolivia’s household heads they are still discriminated against in land ownership despite meeting the criterion of being household heads (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009). The statutory law in which every person above 18 has a right to benefit from the land reform programme is not being enforced because of a number of social customs that take precedence over statutory law.

Though land was being redistributed since 1953, it was not legally titled. It was only in 1996 that the titling process of land was administered by the legislation that initiated the methodical land titling effort. Article 3 paragraph V explicitly recognises equal rights to land by women and men when it states that, “The equity criteria will be applied in the distribution, administration, tenure, and use of land in favour of women independent of their civil status” (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2009: 210). By this statute women did not require to be household heads or to be married in order to be eligible for land rights (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009). However, what prevailed on the ground was the fact that only the name of the husband as the household head appeared on the documents (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009). This shows a deep entrenchment of patriarchal traditions which disregarded statutory law and continued to govern even the titling process.

In late 2001 the government of Bolivia passed the *Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria* (INRA) which improved granting more land rights to women in the land reform. (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009). Lastarria-Cornhiel (2007: 9, 2009: 238) states that “INRA instructed its titling brigades that all land parcels being titled for the first time were to be titled to a couple, not only to the head of the household head.” Despite such legislation the titling brigades continued to title land in the name of the household head whom they presumed to be male. As a result “individual men continued to receive the majority of land titles. Women titles constituted only 9% in 1999, 23% in 2000, and joint titles 27-30% from 1999 to the last few years” (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007: 9). The positive development in the percentage of women owning land was a direct result of the INRA which in 2001 had modified its land redistribution procedures to include more women as land beneficiaries (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007). Though the number is still low as compared to men this should be applauded. The amount of land that was titled to men far exceeds that of women. Individual men in Bolivia have obtained the majority of land titles for homesteads, agricultural parcels and corporate farms (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009; Castellanos, 2010; USAID, 2010). It can be concluded that efforts to include women in land ownership were evident in the legal system. However, titling brigades continued to marginalise women in spite of INRA repeatedly giving instructions to its titling brigades to include women in the land titles in 2004. The refusal by titling brigades to include women on the land titles unmistakably exhibits the effect of patriarchal traditional practices widespread in Bolivian society in which women cannot own land (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009; USAID, 2010).

The sampled scholars on gender and land ownership in Bolivia have sufficiently demonstrated that land ownership in that country is heavily entrenched by customary law (Deere & Leon, 2003; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009; Castellanos, 2010; USAID, 2010; Njaya, 2013). They further affirm that the enforcement of statutory law in land reform programmes tends to be overridden by traditional practices that are heavily informed by patriarchal traditional practices. The scholars highlight that Bolivian indigenous women continue to face several obstacles that force them off the land which they are legally entitled to. They affirm that the insistent heavy influence of traditional customs on Bolivian society has resulted in the continued marginalisation of women from land ownership and other important properties that enable them to be independent in their own right. Also, they attest that patriarchy and machismo remain strong elements of Bolivian society as demonstrated by the challenges that women face when they try to claim their constitutional rights of owning land. All the sampled scholars did not discuss gender and land ownership in Bolivian literature. They also did not discuss how fictional works depict the historical processes on gender and land ownership in Bolivia. The present study examines the other views presented by writers of selected Shona fiction on gender and land ownership. The selected narratives explore the hotly contested matter of gender and land ownership. The possible solutions offered in these selected fictional narratives might help in resolving the gender and land ownership debate which has bedevilled many countries, Zimbabwe included.

2.2.2 Gender and Land Ownership in Brazil

Brazil has been reported to have the highest levels of inequality of land distribution in the world (Guivant, 2003; Barsted, 2005; UN Habitat, 2005; Juliano, 2006; FAO, 2008). An estimated 1% of the Brazilian population owns 45% of all land in Brazil; and nearly five million families are homeless (UN Habitat, 2005; Onsrud, Paixao & Nichols, 2006). Such shocking statistics amply reveal that ownership of land as a resource is a real challenge in Brazil for both men and women. Barsted (2005:15) has also noted the scarcity of land in Brazil and states that, “Lack of available land causes thousands of Brazilians to settle in slums and shanty towns in urban areas controlled by gangs engaged in drug trafficking and violent crimes.” This explains why Brazilians with insecure land tenure end up in slums that are characterised by land related conflict because there is stiff competition for this limited resource. Such a scenario where both men and women have challenges in ensuring secure

rights to land often leave women on the bottom of the ladder, they normally suffer the brunt of these inequalities due to a number of factors that militate against them.

Analogous to other Latin American countries, Brazil in 1983 approved an agrarian reform programme which was aimed at expropriating unproductive *latifundios* and redistribute it to the landless poor people for settlement (Guivant, 2003). The government's process of land reform has been criticised as very slow and it has resulted in the landless peasants becoming restless. The landless peasants have mobilised rural workers and formed the Landless Workers Movement (MST) who in turn mobilised rural workers as a means of forcibly acquiring land (Araujo, et. al. 2006). It can be noted that such a violent process largely excludes women for they lack the stamina and will power involved in such brutal mechanisms of land acquisition.

In executing its agrarian reform programme, Brazil was informed by its constitution which gives both men and women equal opportunities to acquire land and register it in their own names. Confirming the equal opportunities offered by the constitution of Brazil, the UN Habitat (2005) states that "The Constitution provides for gender equality in obtaining titles to property; property rights or concessions under the agrarian reform programme may be allocated to men and women either individually or as joint owners" (Government of Brazil Constitution, Article 189 cited in UN Habitat, 2005). The constitution also broadens the right of inheritance to partners in stable unions and not limiting it to civil marriage (Government of Brazil cited in UN Habitat, 2005). Furthermore the 1988 Constitution guarantees women the right to have agrarian reform land titled in their names (Araujo, et. al. 2006). Despite having such a democratic constitution which accorded both men and women equal rights to acquire and own land through land reform or any other means, women still remain excluded from land ownership due to a number of factors.

The family farmer policy which the Brazilian government implemented in its land reform programme excluded women to be rightful owners of land. This is because land was allocated to a family and it was registered in the name of the head of the household. The man was usually the head of the household and it was rare for women to register land in their own

names and have their husbands as dependents unless the husband was an alcoholic (Guivant, 2003). Women were therefore largely excluded from early land reform initiatives since preference was given to the male head of the household (Araujo, et. al. 2006). To demonstrate the exclusion of women from early land reform initiatives, the agrarian reform census which was organised by the National Institute for Colonisation and Land Reform (INCRA) in 1996 revealed that after thirty two years of land reform only 12% of women had land registered under their names (Guivant, 2003).

Similarly, Araujo, et. al. (2006) content that the forms for registration of land titles do not include the woman's name but only the husband's name as the owner. The woman's name would appear under dependents. This excluded married women from rightfully owning land and having titles as it were. The single women and widows even though they were heads of households also did not benefit from land reform as was expected because they also lacked a number of the requisite documents that were needed for one to be registered as a land owner. For women to become eligible to land titles, for example, eleven documents are needed in order for them to apply (Onsrud, Paixao & Nichols, 2006). These documents are obtained in town and the total cost for obtaining merely one document is about USD30, which is very costly for these Brazilian women such that they end up abandoning the pursuit of acquiring such documents and hence failing to participate in land reform programmes as land owners (Onsrud, et. al. 2006). In the north east part of Brazil female headed households are common but ownership of land by these female heads of households is not (Onsrud, et. al. 2006). This proves that the obstacles that women face in accessing land in Brazil are many.

Since the 1988 constitution which accorded both men and women equal rights in accessing land, it was only in 2001 that the government of Brazil altered the male land ownership practice and started to issue land reform titles in accordance with the constitution (Guivant, 2003). Despite these efforts women are still marginalised in land ownership in Brazil because of socio-cultural factors which have permeated deeply into the Brazilian society. These social cultural practices militate against women in terms of land ownership. Inheritance patterns, similar to those in Bolivia, favour the male child and the girl child is not included in the inheritance of land. Of note is the tradition of *minorato* which gives the youngest son the right to inherit land and take care of parents in their old age (Guivant, 2003; Onsrud, et. al.

2006). Traditional inheritance practices deter women's ability to obtain land in rural areas and if they did it was ordinarily through their dowries which their husbands controlled. Lack of land ownership and failure to be recognised as agriculturalists forced women to migrate to urban areas to seek employment; and affordable housing continued to be scarce for them (Onsrud, et. al. 2006).

The sampled scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in Brazil have demonstrated that Brazil is also governed by both statutory and customary laws in the distribution and allocation of vital resources, land included (Guivant, 2003; Barsted, 2005; UN Habitat, 2005; Araujo, et. al. 2006; Onsrud, et al. 2006; FAO, 2008). They have also brought to the fore the fact that social and cultural norms tend to override statutory law when it comes to accessing land and other resources. They further contend that women in Brazil are excluded from land ownership by socio-cultural beliefs and practices, inadequate documents and lack of financial resources. These scholars however, did not discuss gender and land ownership in fictional works of art that also mirror the reality of the environment from which they emerge. The current study examines how literary voices intervene in suggesting practical intervention strategies to Zimbabwe's gender and land ownership question through critiquing fictional narratives which could proffer possible solutions to this matter as depicted by the writers.

2.2.3 Gender and Land Ownership in Peru

In Peru, exactly as in Bolivia and Brazil, traditional customs and statutory laws regulate land ownership. Before the colonisation of Peru by Spain, land ownership was governed by traditional customs alone. Inheritance laws dictated that land was supposed to be inherited and owned by men, women were excluded from inheriting and owning land (Wiig, 2012). Traditional gender roles in Peru designated that men were responsible for farming, and hence owners of the land whilst women took care of the children and small animals (Wiig, 2012). Women had access to land through their husbands for customary law dictated that they could only access land as long as they remain married to their husbands. Once they are separated by divorce they lost the rights they formerly enjoyed (Wiig, 2012).

Under the Spaniard colonial rule Peru's land ownership was altered in the sense that even the males were dispossessed of their land. Wiig (2012:11) attests that, "Since Spaniard colonization large tracks of land, *haciendas*, were expropriated and owned by the colonizers, the local populations were enslaved." Under colonialism both indigenous male and female Peruvians did not own land but worked as slaves on the colonial masters' *haciendas*. The local populations provided slave labour on the *haciendas* until the land reform of the 1960s-70s (Wiig, 2012). Such hard labour and maltreatment on the *haciendas* made the local population to realise that they had been dispossessed by the Spaniards and they called for repossession of their land. The major slogan during those days was 'land to the tiller,' which meant that land was supposed to be owned by the indigenous populations and not the Spaniards who were simply benefiting from the slave labour of the indigenous populations. Peru finally got its independence from Spain and inherited skewed land distribution patterns in which the indigenous people remained largely landless whilst the former colonisers owned large tracks of land, *haciendas*.

To counter the colonial legacy, the post-independent Peruvian government started a land reform programme in which it expropriated those large tracks of land and redistributed them to the indigenous people. The initial purpose of the land reform programme was to promote collective farming by indigenous populations (Wiig, 2012). The collective farming also had its own challenges and the Peruvian government under the leadership of General Velasco expropriated land and distributed it to individual household heads (Wiig, 2012). However, the government of Peru abandoned collective farming and opted for family farming parallel to other Latin American countries that had carried out land reform programmes earlier. Under family farming, the land was distributed to the head of the household, in most cases who was male. Women mainly benefited as dependents of their husbands, fathers or brothers and were excluded from benefiting in their own right.

Even though land had been redistributed it was not registered. The Peruvian government in 1996 then started titling land. The titling of land was done through a Special Land Titling and Cadastre Project (PETT). The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funded PETT's rural titling efforts in 1996 and trained agents had titled 1.5 million parcels of land by 2006 (Wiig, 2012). The land titles were mostly issued in the names of the household heads who were

mainly male. Observing the marginalisation of women in the early titling period in Peru Deon and Leon (cited in Wiig, 2012: 4) state that, “Only 13% of the parcels were then recorded as jointly owned, while the man alone owned 75% of the parcels and the women only 12%.” This indicates that the initial land titling project excluded women due to the social cultural practices that have been alluded to earlier on.

In Peru there were also some title-on-demand programmes in which the couple who wanted to have their land titled would approach the titling agents on their own. In this case the couple was supposed to agree willingly the name that was supposed to be put on the title deed and generally couples opted for the husband’s name due to some deeply engrained social customs that preferred men as land owners (Wiig, 2012). Thus even the voluntary approach to titles by couples also disadvantaged women.

In 2000 Hernando de Soto, a Peruvian economist published a book, *The Mystery of Capital* in which he argued for individual ownership rights which are acquired through titling of land into a private property (de Soto, 2000). According to de Soto once an asset is registered in can be fungible, which means it can be used as collateral and be able to generate more money (de Soto, 2000). Such ideas then permeated the Peruvian society and from 2003 gender affiliated NGOs ran local campaigns making women aware of the need to have identity documents so that they could also benefit from the land reform programme (Glavian, Wiig & Stokke, 2011; Glavian, Stokke & Wiig, 2012). De Soto’s ideas in Peruvian society influenced the rate at which women acquired land titles as individuals or jointly with their husbands. Wiig (2012) has also observed this success story of Peru in enabling women to own land and states that, “The Peruvian case is still one of the most successful in documenting the achievement of high rates of joint ownership, 57%” (Wiig, 2012: 8). The figure had risen significantly from the initial joint titles of 13% before the implementation of de Soto’s ideas (Deon & Leon cited in Wiig, 2012).

The sampled scholars who have discussed gender and land ownership in Peru regards that country’s gender and land ownership initiatives as a success story in promoting joint titles in land ownership by both husband and wife (Glavian, et. al. 2011; Glavian, et. al. 2012; Wiig,

2012). They further assert that despite the country being a success story for realising women's rights in land ownership, the number of titled women land owners in Peru still lags behind that of men. They concur that the factors for the discrepancy include; traditional cultural practices, lack of identity documents, financial constraints and the government's policy of family farming. These sampled scholars have not however discussed how gender and land ownership is depicted in fictional works of art. They did not converse the realities of life portrayed in literature. The current investigation, however, examines how the selected Zimbabwean authored narratives portray gender and land ownership realities, especially their influence in shaping people's conceptions of equality in ownership of resources like land and promoting communities in achieving sustainable livelihoods.

2.2.4 Gender and Land Ownership in Mexico

Akin other Latin American countries, land ownership in Mexico is governed by both statutory and customary laws. In Mexico customary law also seems to influence even the current land ownership trends between men and women despite statutory law giving both men and women equal access to land.

Land ownership in Mexico was unequally distributed in a feudal-like system in which landless Mayan labourers worked (in indentured servitude) on large scale private farms for the feudal landlords (Brown, 2004). This unequal distribution of land between the feudal landlords and the indigenous Mayan people resulted in discontentment which led to the Mexican Revolution of 1910 (Deininger & Breciani, 2001; Haenn, 2004). The main aim of the revolution was to address these inequalities in land ownership that prevailed during the feudal period in which both indigenous Mayan men and women did not own land but had to provide slave labour to the feudal landlords (Deininger & Breciani, 2001; Brown, 2004; Haenn, 2004).

Mexico is a unique country that has had a very long history of land reform. A land reform programme was started soon after the revolution of 1910 which ended with neoliberal reforms in 1993 (Castellanos, 2010). The land reform initially started by redistributing land into *ejidos* and *comunidades*, (rural village collectives in which land was held communally)

(Brizzi, 2001; Brown, 2004; Haenn, 2004; Castellanos, 2010). The government of Mexico retained ownership of the redistributed land allocating only usufructary rights which were not alienable to members of the *ejidos* or *comunidades* (Brizzi, 2001; Deininger & Bresciani, 2001; de Ita, 2006; Castellanos, 2010). This meant that the members of these newly formed *ejidos* and *comunidades* only had user rights. The user rights were to a portion of land which families would receive to build their house, farm individually with shared access to communally held property and land of the *ejido* or *comunidad*. Members were allowed to farm up to 4 hectares of forest land and up to 8 hectares of bush land individually with their families. The land was supposed to be divided equally among members (Haenn, 2004; Castellanos, 2010). Since user rights were given to families it meant that it was the head of the household who controlled the land and identified as the ‘owner of the land’. Women were therefore discriminated against in accessing land as individuals independent of their husbands.

In 1992 Mexico changed its land reform strategy and allowed for privatisation and market transfers of *ejidal* land rights. This is because the government realised that beneficiaries of collective farms lagged behind in development. In communally owned farms beneficiaries did not put maximum effort to production as compared to individually owned family farms due to lack of tenure security. The goals of the changes were to increase efficient functioning factor of the markets and to increase agricultural investment (Castellanos, 2010). According to Castellanos (2010: 8) “As part of the 1992 reforms the government of Mexico also instituted a massive regularization programme known as Program for the Certification of *Ejido* Land Rights and the Titling of Urban House Plots (PROCEDE)”. PROCEDE’s goal was to strengthen tenure security among *ejido* members who previously held user rights only. de Ita (2006: 9) affirms that “PROCEDE was highly successful in regularizing land rights across rural Mexico. By 2005, 96% of agricultural households had registered their land rights, and 80% had received titles.” The statistics demonstrate that the titling of land moved on swiftly but what has to be noted is the fact that this land was mainly registered in the names of the male figure heads of households and not in women’s names. Even though the Constitution of Mexico allows for equal access to land women were largely excluded from land redistribution programme and most registration certificates are held by men.

Traditional customs and practices in Mexico, *usos y costumbres* still discriminate against women. The inheritance practices in Mexico favour sons and not daughters. These traditional customs have even influenced the land reform exercise by further marginalising women from at first the *ejidos* in which they did not have user rights, and even in the post 1992 reform in which land was registered (Castellanos, 2010). de Ita (2006:10) notes that “initially women were only to become members of the *ejidos* or *comunidades* if they were widows or single women supporting a family.” Despite the suspension of this rule women still do not hold use-rights and are not voting members of *ejidos* or *comunidades* and some *comunidades* even bar women from their meetings (Young, 1998; Deere & Leon, 2001; FAO, 2002; Brown, 2004; Castellanos, 2010). Most scholars have also noted that the post 1992 reforms have exacerbated the erosion of women’s rights on *ejidos* because it was only *ejidatarios* who were allowed to vote on new regularisation and tenure regimes, thereby strengthening only men’s (*ejidatarios*) land rights (Brizzi, 2001; Deininger & Bresciani, 2001; Haenn, 2004; de Ita, 2006; Castellanos, 2010).

The sampled scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in Mexico have amply demonstrated that women’s land rights in that country are heavily compromised by some social traditional customs which marginalised them from benefiting from the land reform programme (Young, 1998; Brizzi, 2001; Deere & Leon, 2001; Deininger & Bresciani, 2001; FAO, 2002; Brown, 2004; Haenn, 2004; de Ita, 2006; Castellanos, 2010). The scholars further proclaim that Mexico despite having a very long history of land reform, from 1910 to 1993 has not accorded women the same rights as men in access to land and even ownership. They also highlight that even though the constitution of Mexico calls for equal rights in property ownership including land, the actual implementation of the long reform process continued to marginalise women. Furthermore, the scholars state that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in Mexico to promote women’s access and ownership rights. They also, affirm that Mexican women’s failure to have user rights in *ejidos* and *comunidades* substantially demonstrates the uphill undertaking that the country is still facing in terms of implementing equal access to land between men and women as enshrined in the constitution. The sampled scholars have not discussed gender and land ownership as depicted in literature which is also a social science and is a very valid way of illustrating gender and ownership issues in any society. The current study goes beyond historical narratives to decipher what fictional narratives have to offer on gender and land ownership. The study also critically

analyses the interface between lived realities of gender and land ownership and their influence on the selected fictional writers' understanding of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. It also examines the various responses proffered by fictional writers to the gender and land ownership question in Zimbabwean history.

2.2.5 Summary on Gender and Land Ownership in Latin America

The sampled scholars on Latin America demonstrate that women are marginalised in land ownership in both government initiated land redistribution exercises and traditional methods of land ownership. They further highlight that generally women are disadvantaged by the following five factors in land ownership namely; male preference in inheritance, male privilege in marriage, male bias in both community and state programmes of land distribution and gender bias in the land market (Deere & Leon, 2003; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2007, 2009; USAID, 2010). The scholars also contend that these five factors militate against women when they try to engage in land ownership initiatives. Finally, they affirm that despite statutory laws in Latin American countries explicitly stating gender equality in land ownership, they are not enforceable; they are usually overridden by traditional customs that take precedence and continue to discriminate women in land ownership. The sampled scholars give a historical overview of gender and land ownership in Latin America and none of them discusses the depiction of gender and land ownership in fictional works of art. Accordingly, there has been no study that explores the relationship between literature, gender and land based livelihoods. The current study hopes to bridge that gap by discussing gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction.

The Latin American scenario has amply established that women still face a number of challenges when it comes to land ownership. The discussion now focuses on gender and land ownership in Africa to see if there are any similarities with the Asian and Latin American scenarios.

2.3 An Overview of Gender and land ownership in Sub-Saharan Africa

Women's land rights remain a contested terrain in post-colonial Africa (Kameri-Mbote, 2014). This is because the various methods in which land is accessed disadvantage the female gender and yet women also need land in order for them to be self-sufficient and independent from men (Agarwal, 1994). Land in sub-Saharan Africa shares similar trends to those in Asia and Latin America, it is accessed through customary law, statutory law, the market, state initiated land reform programmes and in some instances through religion (Islam and African Traditional Religion). In African societies land tenure is governed chiefly by customary tenure, even in instances where statutory law gives equal rights to land ownership for both men and women, usually customary law overrides statutory law.

Njaya (2013: 68) contends that "land ownership in Africa is more difficult to interpret because much of the land is held collectively and / or is untitled." He additionally states that there are intersecting rights to land in different categories of land ownership namely, private, communal and state owned (Njaya, 2013). What has to be noted is the fact that in all these different types of ownership that prevail on the continent, women are marginalised. They are at the periphery while men are at the forefront of accessing the land resource.

Women's land ownership rights in most sub-Saharan African countries continue to be fundamentally unrecognised. They generally access land under customary tenure through their male relatives. Customary law differs from country to country but it has general characteristics which generally do not give women inheritance and ownership rights. Women ordinarily have usufructary, user rights and can only access land through their male relatives. These women are by and large vulnerable to losing land once their relationship with these men changes. On the other hand men's access or ownership of land is also determined by their relationship to women, for they are generally allocated land through the marriage institution. It is only after marriage that a man can be allocated land by the traditional authorities in under customary tenure. In matrilineal societies land is similarly passed on to the male child, a woman passes on land to her nephews and not nieces and daughters, the male children inherit through their mother's line in matrilineal societies (Quansah, 2012; Kameri-Mbote, 2014). Quansah (2012: 151) has also observed this and states that "in both matrilineal and patrilineal societies in Africa, land is predominantly allocated to males and

transferred intergenerationally to males, to nephews in matrilineage and sons in patrilineage.” Most scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in Africa have also observed this marginalisation of women in as far as land rights are concerned (Razavi, 2007; Budlender & Alma, 2011; Fon, 2011; Paradza, 2011; Bonye, 2012; Njaya, 2013; Doss, et. al. 2013; Spichiger & Stacey, 2014; Mafa, et. al. 2015; Kieran, et. al. 2015).

Gender and land ownership in Africa is even made more complex by the continent’s colonial history. Almost all the 54 African countries have been subjected to colonialism. Before colonialism, land was governed by customary tenure in which women accessed land through their male relatives. The onslaught of colonialism resulted in the expropriation of land by colonial settlers, who took large tracts of land that were fertile and forced Africans into barren pieces of land which were not fit for human habitation. This meant that even the African men no longer had access to arable land which they formerly had before colonialism and could not apportion pieces of land to their female folk. Consequently customary law which used to be a social safety net in as far as women’s access to land was concerned was even more hostile to the female folk for they could no longer enjoy land access rights which they formerly relished before the onslaught of colonialism (Osome, 2014; Kameri-Mbote, 2014; Mafa, et. al. 2015).

Also, post-independence policies that the African governments followed did not offer women access to land. Most of the World Bank funded land reform programmes in Africa distributed land to the household head who was presumed to be male. These land reform policies were gender blind and did not consider women’s position in terms of land ownership (Manji, 2001, 2003; Razavi, 2007). These reforms were based on the principle that assets that were distributed to the male head of the family would be equitably distributed and beneficial to all household members which turned out not to be the case (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 1997; Razavi, 2007; Fonjong, Sama-Lang & Fon, 2011; Mafa, et. al. 2015). The family unit or household also turned out to be a conflict zone, and women were usually disadvantaged by such reforms. Apart from the land reform policies the market also did not make it easier for women to access land in Africa because women did not have the financial resources to purchase land as compared to their male counter parts. Most researchers have concurred that women in sub-Saharan Africa own less amount of land as compared to men. Doss, et. al.

(2013) have clearly brought to the fore women's marginalisation in land ownership when they state that:

Of the total land area owned or accessed by households, women solely own (documented and undocumented) a high of 31% in Malawi, followed by Uganda (16%), Tanzania (15%), Niger (8%), and Nigeria (less than 1%). Comparatively men solely own, on average, 99 times as much land area as women in Nigeria, and 1.1 to 6.9 times as much land area as solely owned by women in other countries (Doss, et. al, 2013: 30).

The statistics exhibit that women in sub-Sahara Africa are still marginalised in terms of land ownership. The high percentage in Malawi can be attributed to matrilineal societies. In patriarchal societies like Nigeria women's land ownership is still very insignificant, less than 1%. The biased forms of land acquisition resulted in unequal land ownership between men and women in Africa. The succeeding section samples a few countries from the continent to demonstrate the unequal land ownership by gender.

2.3.1 Gender and Land Ownership in Cameroon

In Cameroon, which is related to many other developing countries, land ownership is a contested terrain for both men and women. Land ownership is governed by both customary and statutory laws, resulting in a dual land ownership in the country. However, one needs to understand the Cameroonian society in order to have a good appreciation of the management of land in terms of gender.

Before colonialism, land in traditional Cameroonian societies was conceptualised as a common legacy which was inherited from the ancestors. It was a communal resource which was transmitted from generation to generation. It was branded with a lineage or a community and was managed without a right to be individually owned (Logo & Biekie, 2003; Fonjong, et. al. 2010; Fon, 2011). As a communal resource, land was not owned as an individual property but was governed by the community's legitimate representatives like chiefs and other spiritual leaders. Women could only access it through their male relatives because it was off-limits for them to perform rituals to the ancestors (Fonjong, et. al. 2010). Land was therefore a vital sacred resource that ensured the mediation of both men and women to the sacred.

Also, traditionally, land could be donated in Cameroon through mutual understanding without necessarily expecting any financial return. These donations were driven by filial and parental ties. However, most of these donations were done chiefly between men. Donations to women were only made to single ones who had had male children. Such donations were justified because the land remained in the custody of the male donor but would eventually be inherited by the male children when they were eligible to do so. These male children were from the lineage of the person who would have donated the land to the woman (Logo & Bikie; Fonjong, et. al. 2010). On the contrary women could not donate land, their rights to land were limited to only user rights and did not have the power to bequeath that piece of land to someone else or leave it out for inheritance (Logo & Bikie, 2003: 55). Girl children were also deprived of access to land as compared to male children; it was only the male children who could inherit from their father when they were eligible to do so, after marriage. Fonjong, et. al. (2010) have also observed women's limited land rights in Cameroon. They state that "Pre-colonial Cameroonian women did not have as much rights to land like their male counterparts. This did not cause any developmental problem to them because land was in abundance and communally owned" (Fonjon, et. al. 2010: 157). Thus the abundance of land did not pose any challenges since men had land in excess and men could afford to give women some portions of land to grow their own crops. However, this situation changed during colonial domination when there was competition for this limited resource between the colonial settlers and the indigenous people.

Cameroon was first colonised by the Germans from 1884 to 1914 (Fonjong, et. al. 2010). When the Germans came to Cameroon they took all the fertile land and forced indigenous people to infertile reserves (Fonjong, et. al. 2010). The blacks were forced into small portions of land that were not fit for agricultural activities. Ironically, the Germans gave land certificates to the colonisers and occupancy rights to the indigenous people (Fonjong, et. al. 2010). With land certificates the colonisers had rights to own the land and decide what could be done on the land, they also had eviction rights to remove any indigenous people who previously occupied that land. On the contrary the indigenous people only had occupancy rights and did not own that land, they could be removed from the land any time by those who had ownership rights, the colonisers. This meant that the indigenous people had been deprived of their land through colonial legislations. After Germany's defeat in the First World War, Britain and France jointly colonised Cameroon from 1918 to 1961 and 1960

respectively (Fonjong, et. al. 2010). France colonised the western of Cameroon and Britain the eastern part of the country as western Nigeria (Fonjong, et. al. 2010). Both Britain and France continued with the land laws that had been introduced by the Germans that saw land as an economic resource which could be owned individually (Fonjong, et. al. 2010). The French, like the Germans, declared all unoccupied land vacant and went ahead to expropriate it without the indigenous people's approval (Fonjong, et. al. 2010). Both Britain and France continued to offer land certificates to colonialists and blacks were only given occupancy rights. Thus the blacks were stripped of the ownership rights they had on their ancestral lands which they had formerly enjoyed and held communally. These developments also worked negatively on women who were no longer given portions of land by their husbands to grow crops which they deemed necessary for the family (Fonjong, et. al. 2010; Fon, 2011).

Post- independence period did not make the situation any better for women in Cameroon, for the post-colonial administration did little for women to access land in their own right (Fonjong, et. al. 2010). Under statutory law, which greatly directs the present practice in Cameroon, land is abstracted as property. It is a property resource highly solicited by both the state and its population (Logo & Bikie, 2003: 33; Fonjong, et. al. 2010). The land is used for farming, forestry and mining among other uses. The land is both a political and economic resource, and access to it is also based on one's political muscle and social networks.

Statutory law in Cameroon gives both men and women equal rights in terms of access and ownership of land. Logo & Bikie, (2003: 53) observe that "Law No. 74/1 of 6 July regulates in a non-categorical way land appropriation by Cameroonians. It stipulates that the state guarantees to all persons physical or moral possessing lands in property, the right to enjoy it and to deal with it freely." There is no discrimination between men and women in the acquisition of land. Logo and Bikie (2003: 53) further state that the conditions and procedures for acquisition of land titles are identical for both men and women. The conditions and procedures are stated in the Decree No. 76/165 of 27 April 1976.

Despite having such decrees and laws that stress equal access to land for both men and women, it has still proved difficult for women in Cameroon to access land. Logo and Bikie

(2003: 53) argue that, “the multiplication and diversification of interests around land contributes to reinforcing women’s exclusion from formal land rights.” This is because the whole nation including the male dominated state is competing for a scarce resource which cannot be equitably shared. Also, land as an economic resource can only be accessed by those who have the political and economic muscle to own, buy and register land as property. Those who are weak and do not have the right political connections are left out and women generally are at the bottom of the ladder, for they lack the correct political and financial connections (Logo & Biekie, 2003). The few women who have male connections (who are able to assist them) end up benefitting from a resource which should be shared by all.

Fonjong, et. al. (2010) have also observed the challenges that women face in owning land in modern day Cameroon. They argue that even the women who are able to purchase land do that secretly without the knowledge of their husbands. They are also not able to register land in their own names but in the name of a male relative or their sons (Fonjong, et. al. 2010). The modern statutory law which calls for non-discrimination in terms of gender in land ownership is not enforceable in Cameroon. Statutory law is overridden by customary law which continues to regulate land access and ownership in the country.

The other factors that exclude women from accessing land on the same basis with men are poverty and illiteracy. Women in Cameroon are generally poor and uneducated. Over and above traditional customs, poverty eliminates women from enjoying the national cake. The lack of financial resources to go through the process that ensures one to have land as a registered property with title deeds also deprives women from enjoying land ownership in modern day Cameroon. Besides, the issue of illiteracy has disadvantaged women from the benefits that are prescribed by law to be enjoyed by both genders in terms of land ownership. The majority of women are not aware of the statutory laws that give the same rights as men in land ownership (Logo & Biekie, 2003: 54; Fonjong, et. al. 2010; Fon, 2011).

Both Christianity and Islam accord women land access and ownership rights in Cameroon. Despite the fact that Christianity and Islam give women the rights to inherit land, in practice this is not happening in Cameroon where society tends to enforce traditional customs that

exclude women from land ownership and management. In addition, “some sectors of the Islamic religion tend to quote Sharia law which views women as inferior and subordinate to men, and hence cannot be on an equal footing with men as far as ownership of resources is concerned” (Logo & Bikie, 2003: 58). African Traditional Religion on the other hand is also rooted in African traditional customs and beliefs which allow women to access land through their male relatives.

All the sampled scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in Cameroon have revealed that the Cameroonian set up exhibits that women, despite using the land and needing it for various agricultural activities, often find themselves excluded by both customary and statutory laws in accessing land (Logo & Bikie, 2003; Fonjong, et. al. 2010; Fon, 2011). The scholars also state that even after securing land most women can still not register it in their names. Additionally, most women cannot as well go to courts to claim the rights that they would have been deprived of, for they generally fear the male-dominated courts and end up compromising and live with the status quo which excludes them. The sampled scholars also affirm that most of the women still continue to access land through their male relatives with an exception of a few elite women who are able to pay for such expensive land deals and also to contest their ownership in court. Finally, the sampled authors also argue that it can suffice to say that women’s access to land in Cameroon is still mediated through their male relatives and is heavily influenced by cultural beliefs and customs. These same cultural beliefs have also prejudiced Islamic and Christian ways of gender and land ownership. All the sampled scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in Cameroon have not discussed gender and land ownership as depicted in Cameroonian literature. However, the current research focuses on gender and land as depicted in selected Zimbabwean novels. It proceeds from earlier research that is based on reality and goes further to critique how the various literary voices respond to the gender and land ownership question, particularly the writers’ solutions regarding the challenges characterising the gender and land ownership debate.

2.3.2 Gender and Land Ownership in Ghana

As in most of West Africa and sub-Saharan Africa land rights are regulated by customary law and statutory law. Ghana is almost identical to most African countries; it is a former colony

which has likewise imbibed the colonial settler's concept of land ownership which is now enshrined in its statutory law that governs the country today. To clearly understand land ownership in Ghana it is imperative to discuss the evolution of gender and land rights in Ghanaian history.

In traditional Ghanaian society there were different types of land control, which included land controlled by chiefs and *tindaabas*, traditional ownership institutions that were principally male (Bonye, 2012). There was also community, family and individual ownership arrangements that subsumed that women were catered for but not explicitly so (Bonye, 2012; Quansah, 2012). Women could not explicitly own land as it was believed that they did not sacrifice to the spirits of the land, which was a requirement for controlling land in traditional Ghanaian society (Bonye, 2012). The chiefs and male family heads held ancestral land on behalf of their families. The real owners of the land were the ancestors to whom rituals were supposed to be performed (Quansah, 2012). Women accessed land through their male relations; they got temporary use of plots from their husbands and fathers. Duncan and Brant (cited in Bonye, 2012) have also observed Ghanaian women's marginalisation in land access and control. They state that control of land was mostly bestowed in lineages, clans and family units and this was generally ascribed to men by lineage of clan heads. Whilst men had full access rights and control over land, women often had partial or conditional access rights. This is because their access rights were negotiated through their male relatives. Land was also inherited through the male line; women could not inherit land (Bonye, 2012; Quansah, 2012). Even in matrilineal societies women gave land to their nephews and not nieces, so men inherited through their mother's line while women were side-lined (Bonye, 2012; Quansah, 2012). What has to be noted is the fact that the type of ownership of land in traditional Ghanaian society did not include title; land was not a private property, as was later brought about by the British, but was owned by a clan, lineage or family.

Ghana was colonised by Britain and the colonial settler went ahead to institute laws that promoted private property. They also dispossessed the indigenous black people of their land and put them in barren areas. Under colonial rule, men did not have enough fertile land to share with the women. The dispossession of land resulted in the historical usurpation of women's land rights. It also resulted in the evolution of land ownership from family

ownership that was acquired through allocation and inheritance to individual ownership that was acquired through purchase and gifts (Bonye, 2012).

In post-independent Ghana, the colonial dictates of perceiving land as a private property have continued to prevail. Land in Ghana is owned through customary and statutory law. Under customary law in post-colonial Ghana “In many communities, the lineage authorities allocate land to the male household head. Women on the other hand, have secondary cultivation rights that they obtain through male family members” (Quansah, 2012:144). Under statutory law both men and women have equal rights to access and own land. But what is happening practically on the ground is the fact that women still continue to be marginalised because customary law overrides statutory law as is happening in other countries that have been reviewed in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Gray and Kevane (1992:6) have noted this further marginalisation of women from land in Ghana when they state that, “as land increases in value, individual men and corporate groups dominated by men, including state authorities, find it in their interest to renegotiate and challenge, before traditional authorities and statutory bodies the direct and indirect ties that support women’s rights to land.” The state lands exclude women, even the land owned by corporates also exclude women because these are male dominated institutions that are in control of land at the expense of women.

In addition, in 1999 Ghana enacted a National land Policy which was silent on women’s land rights or access to land or other gender issues (Spichiger & Stacey, 2014). In 2008 the National lands Commission established the land Administration Act which is responsible for managing state and vested land (GoG, 2011). Also the constitution of Ghana accords both men and women equal ownership and access rights to land. The country is also a signatory to non-gender discriminatory laws like Convention of Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). “Despite having such legislation which aims at protecting and promoting women’s rights in land, women are still disadvantaged because these legislations have been weakly implemented due to strong cultural impediments” (Ghana Joint Assistance Strategy, 2007: 5). Tsikata (2009) sums up gender and land ownership in Ghana when she argues that patriarchy had affected women’s ownership, access to and control of land in traditional rural societies. Over and above this she affirms that even in modern day Ghana, the control of land

by women in urban areas is not different from what pertains in traditional rural areas (Tsikata, 2009). This has resulted in more men possessing land at the expense of women.

The Ghanaian scenario is not different from other developing countries where women do not have ownership of customary land but continue to have access rights through their husbands, fathers or father-in-laws (Runger, 2006; Toulmin, 2009). It is still male family heads of households who are in charge of establishing ownership to land. Women can still not access land through the market because they lack the financial resources to do so. The preceding discussion has established that land tenure system in Africa and Ghana in particular is such that, land use and its control in the pre-colonial era and post-colonial era is in the hands of men (Quansah, 2012). Despite all the artificial legislations men in Ghana still control ownership and access to important resources like land.

All the sampled scholars who have discussed gender and land ownership in Ghana have only given a historical reality of this aspect and have not bothered to discuss how gender and land ownership is perceived by writers of fiction (Runger, 2006; Toulmin, 2009; Tsikata, 2009; GoG, 2011; Bonye, 2012; Quansah, 2012; Spichiger & Stacey, 2014). The current study examines how the writers of selected Shona fiction depict the historical processes that influence gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe.

2.3.3 Gender and Land Ownership in Nigeria

Akin to other African, Asian and Latin American countries, land ownership in Nigeria is regulated by customary, Islamic and statutory laws and none of which is dominant (Aluko & Amidu, 2006). This legal pluralism causes a degree of indecision about land rights particularly for vulnerable groups. The vulnerable groups include women, pastoralists and migrants and this results in many land related conflicts for which the different customary and judicial arbitration bodies have failed to find lasting solutions (Aluko & Amidu, 2006).

Traditionally, in Nigeria, land was acquired by conquest and through first settlement in a given place (Osemeobo, 2014). The people who settled together owned the land together as a

community and land ownership was based on the ability to cultivate virgin land (Osemeobo, 2014). Since most women could not clear virgin land for cultivation they accessed this land through their male relatives. Similarly, land that was acquired through conquest was controlled by men; and women accessed it through men (Osemeobo, 2014). Furthermore, land was also acquired through inheritance and under customary law, inheritance excluded women from owning land. Customary rights in Nigeria do not confer women the right to use, control or transfer land (Aluko & Amidu, 2006; Agwu, Amasiatu & Onuoha, 2010; Abara, 2012; Adekola, Adereti, Koledoye & Owombo, 2013; Osemeobo, 2014). It is only under Islamic law where women could inherit land. This is because according to Sharia law land is a gift from Allah and everybody has usufructary rights to it (Aluko & Amidu, 2006). This implies that Muslim women when divorced can leave their husband's home with all their property including land. Customarily, on the contrary, if a woman is divorced she no longer enjoys her user rights to land which she got through marriage (Aluko & Amidu, 2006).

Before the advent of British colonialism in 1862, land tenure in Nigeria was governed by customary law which was indigenous to the people. There are many systems of customary laws as there are ethnic groups but they do have common characteristics of excluding women from land ownership (Aluko & Amid, 2006). Also, Islamic law was used to regulate land tenure especially in the north. With the onslaught of British colonialism some of these tenure systems were usurped by colonialism that enacted individual property rights and disposed women of the land they formerly enjoyed from their male relation (Aluko & Amid, 2006). Thus colonialism further marginalised women from land ownership.

In post-independent Nigeria, land tenure is governed by customary, statutory and Islamic laws. The 1999 constitution of Nigeria outlaws discrimination on the grounds of gender but the customary and religious laws still continue to constrain women's land rights (Abara, 2012). Civil law entitles women equal access to land but very few states have enshrined this in their constitutions (Abara, 2012). Customary laws in Nigeria vary considerably from one ethnic group to another but in no region does customary law grant women equal inheritance rights with men (Abara, 2012). Even to this present day some ethnic groups in Nigeria, through marriage and inheritance practices prohibit women from owning land (Adekola, et. al. 2013).

In Nigeria land can also be accessed through purchase, and it is only men who are better positioned to acquire land through the market. Women still suffer the brunt of marginalisation because they do not have the financial resources to own land. Nigeria is one of the countries which has the least number of women land owners in Africa, having a female land ownership of 1% (Doss, et al. 2013). This demonstrates that women's ownership rights are still far from being achieved when the most populous country in Africa like Nigeria has a very insignificant number of women who own land.

The sampled scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in Nigeria have demonstrated how gender inequality is entrenched into the rules that govern land tenure system and how this has overridden civil law in Nigeria in terms of land ownership (Aluko & Amidu, 2006; Agwu, et. al. 2010; Abara, 2012; Adekola, et. al. 2013; Osemeobo, 2014). They have also highlighted that all the strategies of accessing land in Nigeria namely; purchase, share cropping, inheritance, squatting, reform policies and customary law discriminate women. They also state that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in order to enable women to access and own land on an equal basis with men. However, these sampled scholars have not researched on gender and land ownership in fictional works. The present research builds on this earlier research and goes further to research on gender and land ownership in selected works of fiction in Zimbabwe. It investigates how the colonial laws discussed by these scholars influence women and men's access to, and ownership of important resources like land. It also hopes to tap from the possible solutions proffered by writers of fiction in resolving the gender and land ownership question in Zimbabwe in particular, and Africa and the rest of the world in general.

The preceding three sections have discussed gender and land ownership in three sampled countries in West Africa. The following section moves on to East Africa to ascertain the types of land ownership by gender in three sampled countries in that region.

2.3.4 Gender and Land Ownership in Uganda

Land ownership in Uganda is also influenced by the country's history. Like other African countries discussed earlier on, Uganda was also subjugated to colonialism. Thus the type of land ownership in Uganda today mirrors the history that the country has evolved through. Currently, land ownership in Uganda is regulated by customary and statutory laws. These two laws have resulted in five different types of land tenures in Uganda namely; customary tenure, *mailo* tenure, freehold tenure, leasehold tenure and public tenure (Bikaako & Ssenkumba, 2003; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003; Rugadya, 2007; Bomuhangi, Doss & Meinzen-Dick, 2012). It is necessary to trace the history of the country in order to find out how it gave rise to these different types of land tenure.

Before colonialism land ownership in Uganda consisted of a number of customary tenure systems for both sedentary agriculturalist and pastoralists. Lastarria-Cornhiel (2003) notes that customary tenure in sedentary agricultural communities revolved around kings and chiefs who had the right to allocate land to clans and community households according to customary norms and practices of the respective communities. Every member of the community and household had the right to access sufficient land for their subsistence needs. This right of access came from either the lineage or clan head or from the chief to whom the person pledged allegiance (Asiimwe, 2001; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003; Rugadya, 2007; Bomuhangi, et. al. 2012). The land allocated to a lineage or clan head was not supposed to be rented out, sold and sometimes inheritance rights were not granted. The land that was not used or wanted normally reverted to the chief or king (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003). Most communities in Uganda are patrilineal and most of this land was handed down from father to son, women could not own or inherit land. The male clan heads held the land in custody for their clans; women only had user rights and did not control the land.

With the onslaught of colonialism in Uganda, there were some changes on land ownership patterns. The British colonial settlers expropriated land and also introduced different types of land tenure that marginalised women. Among the land tenure system introduced by the British colonialists was *mailo* land tenure in the 1900s. "This is a quasi-freehold tenure system which the British colonial government introduced to reward agents who advanced British interests with large estates of land" (Bomuhangi, et. al. 2012: 9). This type of land

tenure is found in the central and western regions of Uganda. This is still recognised by the 1995 constitution of Uganda. The significant aspect of this tenure system is that much of the land is used under *kibanja*, peasant tenancy system which may or may not be documented with *kibanja* certificates. Tenants who are mainly male do not have full ownership rights but pay rent to the *mailo* owner (Bomuhangi, et. al. 2012). The Land Act Amendment (GoU, 2010) has strengthened tenants' rights by limiting the rent they must pay to a nominal amount and made it more difficult for *mailo* owners to evict tenants. Thus *kibanja* tenants have indefinite access rights to land.

The other type of land tenure introduced by the colonialists that is still widespread in Uganda today is freehold tenure. This is whereby the owner of the land has a deed which allows them to hold the land indefinitely. The land owner has rights to use, sell, transfer, subdivide and even mortgage the land. This freehold land tenure is only a preserve of the few, namely; kings, chiefs, large scale agricultural estate developers and churches like the Roman Catholic (Bikaako & Ssenkumba, 2003; Bomuhangi, et al. 2012). Still women are excluded in this type of land tenure, they continue to access land through their male relations.

Leasehold land tenure was also introduced by colonialists and is still prevalent in Uganda today. Under this type of tenure the owner grants the tenant exclusive use rights for a precise period of time (Bikaako & Ssenkumba, 2003; Bomuhangi, et al. 2012). Land can also be leased from the state to individuals for a typical lease period of 5, 45 or 99 years (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003). The tenant pays an annual rent and the tenants need not to be Ugandan citizens as required by customary, *mailo* and freehold tenure systems (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003; Bomuhangi, et al. 2012). Also under this tenure system men are the ones who principally lease land and women access it through them. There is also public tenure which applies to land that is designated for public use like the construction of roads, public buildings and designated wetlands (Bomuhangi, et. al. 2012). This land is controlled by the state which is male dominated and excludes women. About 80% of land in Uganda today is still under customary tenure (Bomuhangi, et. al. 2012). So these are the different types of land tenure that are prevalent in Uganda today.

All these types of land tenure systems discriminate against women in terms of land ownership; women only retain ancillary rights through their male counterparts. This system still prevails in Uganda today (Kindi, 2010). However, the 1995 constitution of Uganda prohibits discrimination based on gender; it accords both men and women the same status and rights (GoU, 1995). The government of Uganda made some consultations when it was preparing the Uganda Land Act of 1998. During the consultations there was a provision requiring co-ownership of land by husbands and wives. However, this proposal was not included in the final land Act of 1998 (ILC, 2008). Widows are still vulnerable; they normally lose access rights when their husbands die. Accessing land through purchase is still a mammoth task for Ugandan women who do not have the financial resources. Even though women have legal rights to own and inherit land as enshrined in the constitution their access to land in practice continues to be regulated by cultural norms (Asiimwe, 2001; Kes, Jacobs & Namy, 2011; Bomuhangi, et. al. 2012).

All the sampled scholars that have researched on gender and land ownership in Uganda highlight that the land ownership system in the country still disadvantages women (Gray & Kevane, 1999; 2002; Asiimwe, 2001; Bikaako & Ssenkumba, 2003; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2003; Rugadya, 2007; Kes, et. al. 2011; Bomuhangi, et. al. 2012). They also aver that the colonial and post-colonial land distribution in Uganda has undermined women's land rights and instead strengthened men's hold over land (Gray & Kevane, 1999; 2002; Kindi, 2010). The sampled scholars also concur that all the laws that required land registration or titling resulted in such land being titled in mostly men's names and not women. They have also noted that women in Uganda have made a lot of strides in achieving gender equity in other sectors of the economy but not in land ownership. Consequently, there is still a lot that needs to be done in Uganda to ensure that there is gender equity in terms of land ownership. All the sampled scholars have only discussed how gender and land ownership evolved in the history of Uganda. They have all highlighted the colonial and post-colonial legislations and their impact on gender and land ownership. The present research investigates the relationship between the history of a country and the type of land tenure in relation to gender as depicted in selected works of fiction in Zimbabwe.

2.3.5 Gender and Land Ownership in Kenya

Land ownership in Kenya is regulated by customary, Islamic and statutory laws. These laws are a result of both traditional and colonial influences on Kenyan society. The legal diversity of various laws in determining land ownership results in a degree of doubt about land rights to susceptible groups like women and pastoralists. Whenever there is ensuing conflict in terms of land tenure, customary law tends to override statutory law due to the entrenched patriarchal values in the various ethnic groups of Kenya. The following section discusses how gender and land ownership has evolved in Kenya.

Traditionally, in Kenya land tenure was regulated through customary law. There was no individual ownership of land as in the western notion of ownership, but land belonged to the dead (ancestors) the living and to posterity (future generations), and access to it was ensured for everyone irrespective of gender (Karanja, 1991; Kamari-Mbote, 2009, 2010). Also, land was held and used on a family lineage or clan basis, holding the members of a particular clan together through a male line of inheritance (Mackenzie, 1986; Karanja, 1991; Kamari-Mbote, 2010; Mbrugu, 2014). Among the Kikuyu, one of the major ethnic groups in Kenya, a social holding unit of the land was the *mbari*, lineage (Kamari-Mbote, 2010). Land rights therefore accrued to male members of the *mbari* who were separately allocated plots upon marriage. Men were also entitled to inherit their fathers' land (Kamari-Mbote, 2010). Women on the other hand accessed land through their husbands, they had user rights and did not have rights to inherit land. They grew food crops on the pieces of land that they were allocated by their husbands. Even widows continued to use the lands that were left by their husbands; they were entitled to use rights for life over a portion of their deceased husband's land (Kamari-Mbote, 2010). Also unmarried and divorced women had access to their mothers' land. Women's use rights were secure in pre-colonial Kenya because land was in abundance and the social organisation of the society ensured that women held important structural positions which accorded them user rights (Kamari-Mbote, 2010). This seemingly secure situation of women in as far as land ownership is concerned was seriously affected by the onslaught of colonialism in Kenya.

After the colonisation of Kenya by the British there were a number of laws that were passed that stripped Africans of their land. Britain firstly introduced the western way of ownership of

giving a title deed to all vacant land they had expropriated. Some lands were vacant because the traditional societies practiced shifting cultivation where they left some land to regenerate before coming back to it. Additionally, pastoralists moved from place to place in search of pasture. The colonialists took advantage of this system of land tenure and expropriated all the land that was vacant; Africans were only given occupancy rights on the lands they were occupying. 4.4 million acres of land was expropriated in Kenya between 1905 and 1914 (Kameri-Mbote, 2009, 2010; Mbrugu, 2014). The colonialists were given 99 year leases thereby closing the issue of ownership of land to Africans.

The indigenous people were then forced into reserves that were barren and infertile. The colonialists went further to give certificates of occupancy to Africans who were in the 'Native Reserves.' Whites used land as an asset that could be used as a reward for those who were loyal to the colonial government and in the same sense punishing those who did not support colonial rule by taking away land from them. The Mau guerillas lost land in the native reserves because they were perceived dissenters who worked against the colonial government and were punished for this by further loss of land (Kameri-Mbote, 2010). Women were grossly affected by these colonial laws because they found themselves growing food stuffs on land which was smaller and infertile. Moreover, since there was competition for land between colonialists and the indigenous people with the Africans being forced into barren reserves where women lost some of their rights they formerly enjoyed. Kameri-Mbote (2010) has observed this deprivation of women and states:

Although women's land rights in the pre-reform period were insecure to the extent that they had usufructary rights only and did not enjoy the rights of ownership or disposing, the advent of European colonialism saw whatever security they had in land being eroded and eventually extinguished with the passing of legislation which failed to recognise the rights they previously enjoyed (Kameri-Mbote, 2010: 119).

The colonial set up made women more vulnerable, the powers they had by growing food stuffs and determining the type of crops to be planted on their small plots were taken away when the colonial government put more importance on cash crops that were now grown by men. Additionally, the small parcels of land that men had in the native reserves could not be adequately shared with women thereby taking away the user rights they formerly enjoyed under pre-colonial customary tenure. In addition, land in Kenya can be accessed through Islamic law which allows women to inherit land. However, daughters are often persuaded by

their families to trade off their land rights to their brothers. Those who refuse are considered to be social deviants. For fear of being labelled as such women end up giving their land rights to their male siblings.

In post-independence Kenya, both customary and statutory laws are functional. Even though the constitution of Kenya grants both men and women equal rights in accessing land, the truth is that women are still marginalised. The post-independence land resettlement schemes that were established to settle the landless and the subsequent legislative measures have had little positive effect in alienating the problems of women's landlessness (Kameri-Mbote, 2010; Mbrugu, 2014). This is because even in areas where land reform has taken place, customary practices continue to define rules of accessing land (Kameri-Mbote, 2010). Men still own a greater portion of land in Kenya today. As of 1978 about 7.6 million hectares of land had been registered largely in men's names (Kameri-Mbote, 2010). Women today constitute about 5% of registered land owners in Kenya (Mbrugu, 2014). Consequently, both the colonial and post-colonial legislation continued to register land titles in the names of men. Moreover, of note are the current land grabs that have characterised the third world in post 2000; and these have made it even more difficult for women to access land (Klopp, 2004).

The sampled scholars who have been reviewed in this study concur that the Kenyan situation amply proves that women are still marginalised in land ownership. They claim that the marginalisation is a result of customary, religious, colonial and current land laws in Kenya that are exclusive and have operated against women and the poor in society (Mackenzie, 1986; Karanja, 1991; Kameri-Mbote, 2009, 2010; Mbrugu, 2014). The predominance of patriarchy in law, policy and practice has also led scholars like Kameri-Mbote (2010) to conclude that land has its owners and these are not women. Most scholars argue that there is an urgent need for a more distributive land reform policy premised on the rights of women to share this economic resource on an equitable basis with men (Kameri-Mbote, 2009, 2010, Mbrugu, 2014). All the sampled scholars have not discussed gender and land ownership in works of fiction like the novels. The present study examines how writers of fiction handle the issue of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean literature. It endeavours to bring to the fore possible solutions offered by writers of fiction on how the problem of gender and land

ownership can be resolved in Zimbabwe and other countries that primarily depend on agriculture for their sustainable livelihoods.

2.3.6 Gender and Land Ownership in Tanzania

Akin to the other African countries discussed so far, land ownership in Tanzania is also controlled by customary and statutory law. Tanzania's gender and land ownership policies are also informed by the history that the country has evolved through. Germans firstly colonized the country, and these were followed by the British (Manji, 1996; Mugambi, 2013). In pre-colonial Tanzania land ownership was regulated by customary law; and under this law, ownership of land was predominantly communal, owned by an ethnic group, clan or family (Mugambi, 2013). Under this type of tenure, chiefs, headmen and elders had the power of land administration in trust for the community. Land was then passed on from one generation to another through men who had the obligation to share the land with their wives and children (Mugambi, 2013). Parallel to other African, Asian and Latin American countries discussed so far, women had access rights through their male relatives. Widows continued to use portions of land left by their husbands in trust for their sons, or if they had no sons could remarry their husband's brother (levirate tradition) and continued to access land through that way.

When the colonialists came, they instituted land laws that dispossessed Africans of their lands and this resulted in pressure on land. Once the land was expropriated, access rights among women was insecure. Tanzania waged a liberation struggle in order to regain lost land. In post-independence Tanzania, the government first introduced *ujamaa* villages in which land was owned collectively. Under this tenure system land was owned collectively by the villages and individual households were allocated a portion of land by the village committee to build their house and grow crops. This meant that it was still accessed through the male figure head. This *ujamaa* system had its own short comings and was abandoned. It was abandoned because it did not improve efficiency in farming. The *ujamaa* system also marginalised women for the *ujamaa* land was allocated to household heads who were principally male.

The land policy in Tanzania which was instituted after independence does not discriminate land ownership according to gender, it gives all citizens equal and equitable ways of

accessing land. However, the same land policy has a section on women's access to land which specifies that customary law infers inferior land rights to women, making their access to land ancillary and uncertain (UNECA, 2003; Chingarande, 2004; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Furthermore, the village councils that distribute land in Tanzania are directed by customary law and continue to discriminate against women by giving land to heads of households who, in most cases, are male. In order to rectify this gender injustice in land access, the Tanzanian government drafted a policy statement which states that, 'in order to enhance and guarantee women's access to land and security of tenure, women will be entitled to acquire land in their own right, not only through purchasing but also through allocation' (Mafa, et. al. 2015: 122). The enforcement of these gender sensitive laws is not yet realised in Tanzania as is the case in other countries.

The sampled scholars who have discussed gender and land ownership in Tanzania have not discussed how this is depicted by writers of fictional works of art (Manji, 1996; UNECA, 2003; Chingarande, 2004; Mugambi, 2013; Mafa, et. al. 2015). The present study examines the relationship between historical reality that has been presented by the reviewed scholars and the typical reality that is depicted by writers of selected fictional works in Zimbabwe. It envisages to take a leaf from the solutions proffered by writers of fiction on the gender and land ownership dispute in most countries.

2.3.7 Gender and Land Ownership in Zambia

In Zambia land ownership is regulated by both customary and statutory law. Statutory law does not discriminate women's access to land in theory but in practice women fail to access land because of socio-economic obstacles and customary law (UNECA, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Currently in Zambia, chiefs do not consider women in land allocation. Furthermore, district council officials who work closely with the Commissioner for Lands in handling land applications are generally prejudiced against women whom they regard as inferior to men (UNECA, 2003; Mafa, et al. 2015). It is only recently that married women in Zambia were allowed to apply for land and in so doing were supposed to present sufficient evidence their husbands' approval for their land application (UNECA, 2003; Mafa, et al. 2015). Thus even though women can now apply for land ownership, they still require their husbands' consent. Related to other countries discussed earlier, statutory law gives women the equal access with

men in terms of land ownership. However, this is not enforceable due to customary law, illiteracy and lack of financial resources (Mafa, et. al. 2015). The sampled scholars who have researched on gender and land ownership in Zambia have only focused on the historical processes that deprived women from accessing and owning land. They did not discuss how these historical processes in relation to gender are depicted by writers of fictional works (UNECA, 2003; Chingarande, 2004; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Accordingly there has been no study that explores the relationship between literature, gender and land based livelihoods. The current study hopes to bridge that gap by discussing gender and land ownership in some selected novels by Zimbabwean writers.

2.3.8 Gender and Land Ownership in Botswana

Similar to most countries in Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa that have been discussed so far, women in Botswana still face discrimination in land ownership in both customary and statutory land tenure systems. Botswana boasts of about 50% of female headed households but these cannot freely own land under customary law (Kalabamu cited in UNECA, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). In traditional Tswana culture land was allocated to the male head of the family for purposes of building a homestead and agricultural land for cultivation for the benefit of the family (Kalabamu cited in UNECA, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). In the event that the male head of the family died the family land was inherited by the male children and women despite their marital status could not inherit that land or acquire property of their own. Before the passing of the 1971, the Married Persons Property Act of 1971, husbands were the exclusive administrators of property held by either party before or after marriage (UNECA, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Husbands had total power over a joint estate and could easily dispose of the property without the wives' consent. Contrary to this married women needed the consent of their husbands in everything they did, including acquiring a loan. With developments in the country in terms of gender and ownership of property, women in Tswana society can now acquire property but they still need their husbands' written consent to get that loan (UNECA, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). "Research evidence indicated that patriarchal rules still apply if women want to acquire land in Botswana. Women who were interviewed by UNECA stated that Land Boards sometimes asked a woman to bring her husband, father or brother" (Mafa, et. al. 2015: 116). Single women below 21 had to get authorisation from their parents in all land transactions (UNECA, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Married women became minors once they got married for they

needed guidance and tutelage from their husbands unless they explicitly married out-of-community-of-property Dutch law (Mafa, et. al. 2015). In Botswana, most women neither have the assets nor capital and labour to use the land productively. In 1996 the Deeds Registry Act was amended to eliminate the prejudiced provision which stated that only husbands could transact with the Registrar in cases where spouses were married in-community-of-property. Furthermore, the Tribal Land Act was amended in 1993 to permit all adult citizens the right to use and occupy tribal land anywhere in the country (Mafa, et. al. 2015). Thus in present day Botswana both male and female adult citizens are now eligible for customary land grants and common law leases on tribal land (UNECA, 2003, Mafa, et. al. 2015). Mafa, et. al. (2015) argue that in spite of these new laws, married women in Botswana are still deprived by the Married Persons Property Act discussed above. Such a scenario lays bare the perilous nature of women's land and property rights in Botswana.

The sampled scholars who have researched on gender and land in Botswana have highlighted how customary law persists to undermine women's access to, and ownership of crucial resources like land despite statutory law giving them the leeway to do so. These scholars did not go further to link what happens in reality and what is depicted in literary works of art. The present investigation builds on what has been discussed by these scholars and goes beyond historical presentation of facts to discussing how selected writers of fiction in Zimbabwe portray the historical processes of gender and land ownership. It examines how literary voices contribute to the hotly contested matter of gender and land ownership.

2.3.9 Gender and Land Ownership in South Africa

Traditionally in South Africa, just like in other African countries discussed so far, land was collectively owned by indigenous men and women. Akin to other African countries, land in pre-colonial South Africa was allocated by chiefs to the male household heads. However, after the onslaught of colonialism the indigenous people were deprived of their land by the new colonial invaders. The 1913 Native Land Act deprived indigenous people of their prime land and forced them into barren areas. Furthermore, colonial legislations under apartheid created homelands or *Bantustans* which were very barren areas in which blacks were dumped while the white colonial settlers enjoyed the fertile land which they converted to large scale commercial farms. This discrepancy in land ownership in terms of gender and race is still

very evident even in independent South Africa today. The government of South Africa has not seriously addressed colonially instigated gender and racial disparities in land ownership. Despite some land reform programmes which have taken many forms including restitution, land redistribution and land tenure (Lahiff, 2003; Hall & Cliffe, 2009). In spite of the various land reform programmes adopted by South Africa, disparities in race, and gender in land ownership are still very widespread in South Africa today.

Independent South African is governed by the 1994 constitution which is non-discriminatory but rules of access and inheritance still favour men over women. Despite the provisions of the constitution, traditional authorities in South Africa still play a major role in the allocation of land and they discriminate against women. In South Africa, apart from the constitution, no other law provides for women's independent access to land and the Communal Land Act of 2004 does not safeguard women against discrimination (Mafa, et. al. 2015).

Soon after attaining independence in 1994, South Africa embarked on a land reform programme. The country has implemented World Bank market-assisted land reform policies, although it has charted out its own unique 'willing seller willing buyer' approach different from that of the World Bank (Mafa, et. al. 2015). As stated earlier on South Africa's land reform took three different forms, namely: restitution, redistribution and tenure reform. Restitution claimed historic rights to those who had been dispossessed by the Native Land Act of 1913 (Lahiff, 2003; Hall & Cliffe, 2009; Mafa, et al. 2015). Under the restitution programme recipients could get their land back or the equivalent in cash. In incidents where they got their land back they had to form Community Property Associations or Trusts in which their property would be transferred and registered. Thus property under the restitution programme was registered in the name of the Community Property Association or Trust. There was titling of land but not individual titling but group titling of land or community titling. Thus under this restitution programme families did not get back land individually as families as was the case in pre-colonial society but as a group. Redistributive land reform was intended to redistribute white commercial land to the black farmer; and land tenure reform was intended to redress the issue of insecure rights to land of blacks housed in former *Bantustans* (Mafa, et. al. 2015). All these different types of land reforms that South Africa embarked on were gender blind, they left out women.

The South African land reform programme can be divided into three distinct phases. The first phase was the Settlement Land Reform Grant (SLAG) which ran from 1994 to 1999 in which women are said to constitute 78% of the 78,758 beneficiaries listed on the national database of June 2000. Of note is the fact that this 78% included mainly joint husband and wife listings (Walker, 2001b; Mafa, et. al. 2015) not individual female beneficiaries. During the SLAG period beneficiaries were given a R16, 000 grant each, which was too little to acquire land, so they had to team up and pool their resources together and collectively acquire the allocated property. A larger group could then acquire a whole farm project. The priority of SLAG grants was for resettlement and multiple livelihoods. However, SLAG was criticised for having to force people to join groups in order to buy land and for lack of support to continue with various farming activities other than land purchase (Hall, 2004; Mafa, et. al. 2015). As detailed earlier on, the number of female beneficiaries was not quite clear because the statistics included those who got land together with their husbands. Thus the individual land redistribution in terms of gender is not clear.

The second phase was the Land Redistribution for Agriculture Development (LRAD) which was carried out from 1999 to 2005. LRAD conferred grants to individuals on a sliding scale from a minimum of R20, 000 to a maximum of R100, 000. The shift from SLAG's household to individual in principle opened up possibilities for women to obtain land in their own right, independent of men (Walker, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). In practice, however, LRAD sustained the discrimination of women from the land reform exercise because it gave priority to people with agricultural skills and capital, a sure sign of leaving out women who did not have the capital and professionally recognised skills. The third and current phase is the State Purchase for Lease (PLAS) period from 2006 to date which is almost similar to the Zimbabwean land reform where a group of individuals purchase land from the willing seller. The South African willing seller, willing buyer is different from the Zimbabwean one in that it is not the state which purchases the land for lease to the people but the people themselves, that is, a group of individuals purchase the land in their own right from the willing seller (Sachikonye , 2003; Hall, 2004; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Nevertheless, women are still not benefiting much from the current land reform strategy in South Africa.

The Department of Land Affairs (DLA) through The White Paper on South African land policy confesses the prevailing discrimination against women under many types of tenure systems and proposes a number of ways of redressing such gender injustices in land distribution (DLA, 1997b). Such an acknowledgement is a positive step towards addressing gender equity in land access. Also to be commended is the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) in South Africa, for formulating a Gender Policy Framework in 1997; as a guiding principle which would ensure that women are not discriminated against in future land reform in South Africa (Mafa, et. al. 2015). The gender policy document aimed at creating an enabling environment for women to access, own, control, use and manage land; as well as access credit for productive use of land (DLA, 1997a; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Walker cited in Mafa, et. al. states that:

The Land Reform Gender Policy document committed the Ministry and the DLA to a range of guiding principles to actively promote the principle of gender equity in land reform; these included mechanism for ensuring women's full equal participation in decision-making, communication strategies, gender-sensitive methodologies on project planning, legislative reform, training, collaboration with NGOs and other government structures, and compliance with international commitments such as the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) which South Africa had re-ratified in 1995 (Walker cited in Mafa, et. al. 2015: 121).

Nonetheless, it is disappointing to note that with such honourable principles, women's involvement in the land reform in South Africa is still insignificant. The DLA despite having a very noble principle of the Land Reform Gender Policy has never sensitised its officers who deal with land issues in the provinces. A survey carried out by Walker (2003) in KwaZulu Natal revealed that a number of land officials were unaware of the Land Reform Gender Policy Document, copies of which were not easily available in either the provincial or district offices. There was also no manual from the DLA on how to approach various gender issues like registering polygamous marriages (Walker, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Although the policy is an expression of the DLA's commitment to gender equity at national level, its failure to turn high-level principles into effective tools for implementation is its greatest weakness (Walker, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Likewise women in South Africa, like in other African countries discussed earlier, are still discriminated against in the land reform process despite the country having some noble gender policies.

All the sampled scholars who have researched on gender and land in South Africa have highlighted the challenges that women still face in accessing land in that country. They have not linked what happens in real life with what is depicted in fictional works of art (DLA, 1997a; Lahiff, 2003; Walker, 2001b, 2003; Sachikonye, 2003; Hall, 2004; Hall & Cliffe, 2009; Mafa, et. al. 2015). The current study critically examines the interface between lived experiences and land issues, and their impact on gender and land ownership as depicted in selected Shona fictional works of art at the backdrop of the realities explained by the sampled scholars.

2.3.10 Summary on Gender and Land Ownership in Sub-Saharan Africa

From the ensuing discussion, it can be deduced that “women in sub-Saharan Africa are generally limited to usufruct or users’ rights to land; a situation that makes their holding to land insecure and renders them unwilling to invest resources to ensure a sustainable exploitation of the land” (Fonjong, et. al. 2010: 164). Women’s user rights in sub-Saharan Africa are even not secure because they are determined by their relationship with the male folk. Once the relationship changes through divorce or widowhood, their access to land might also become problematic since there are so many cultural factors that come into play that work against their user rights. After getting a glimpse of gender and land ownership in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa the discussion now focuses on Zimbabwe which is the mainstay of this research.

2.4 Gender and Land Ownership in Zimbabwe

This section focuses on gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe, as is the case with other African countries that have been discussed earlier on, also has a history of colonial legacy. This colonial legacy has influenced the way land is owned by both men and women. One cannot understand gender and land ownership without tracing the different historical periods that the country has evolved through. From pre-colonial period right up to the present day, women in Zimbabwe access land through their association with men. This seemingly glaring manifestation of women accessing land through their male folk is rooted in Afro-centred theories of Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity. It has to be noted from the onset that both men and women relied on each other to access land in traditional Shona culture. It is

not only women who accessed land through the other gender but men as well accessed land through women via the marriage institution. While land ownership for women was mediated through their male folk, for men it was also mediated through marriage that is through the female gender. It was only married men who were allocated land by the chief. This is a clear attestation that both genders relied heavily on each other in order to get land. In trying to understand gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe, it is necessary to trace the different historical periods that the country has evolved through. This is because the different historical epochs have left an entrenched mark on the country's gender and land ownership systems.

2.4.1 Gender and Land Ownership in Pre-colonial Zimbabwe

In pre-colonial Zimbabwean society, customary law regulated access and rights to land. Most scholars agree that land was not owned by an individual in pre-colonial Zimbabwe (Cheater, 1990; Jacobs, 2000; Shumba, 2011; Bhatasara, 2011; Moyo, 2013; Chiweshe, 2015; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Rights to land were controlled by customary law, which is the traditions and customs of the pre-colonial Zimbabwean people. Jacobs (2000) researching on gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe, avers that under customary law land was not privately owned but communally owned yet individually worked by families in order to plant food crops for the family. Land was allocated by chiefs to male household heads. In traditional Shona society land was not individually owned with title deeds but there was some agreement that if one was allocated land, that land belonged to the whole family and would be accessed by everyone in that household, every family member had user rights including women and children in that family (Jacobs, 2015; Cheater, 1990; Mafa, et. al. 2015).

The marriage institution in traditional Shona culture was the gateway for both men and women to access land. Married women acquired land for farming through their marriage ties as wives (Gaidzanwa 1994; Jacobs 1996; 2000; Mvududu 2000; Mafa, et. al. 2015). It was the husbands' responsibility to allocate portions of land to their wives who would grow crops to feed the family. Women could make decisions on the type of crops to be grown on their allocated portions of land, tseu. They were responsible for feeding the family through the produce from their portions of land. Furthermore, women also tilled the family land, while men could just make decisions on the family land they were not physically involved with the production of food, tilling and even harvesting the crop was the preserve of women who were

the chief agronomists in Shona traditional societies (Mvududu, 2000; Schmidt, 1990, 1992; Mafa, et.al. 2015). The ability to work the land and provide for the family gave women a certain status in the family and in society. According to Gaidzanwa (1995) unmarried and divorced women worked on their mothers' fields to grow crops and amass some stock in preparation for marriage. They tilled their mothers' portions of land and were not allocated land through the traditional societal norms. It was only married women who could 'own' land through their marriage. Married women were not allocated land by the chief but had user rights. Similarly married men did not have individual ownership of the land with title deeds as in the western sense but were allocated land through marriage for the benefit of the whole family.

Even though women were not allocated land by the chief they had secure user rights in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. Thus women's economic well-being and access to land was mediated by male relatives, such as husbands, fathers, and brothers among others (Shumba, 2011; Chiweshe, 2015; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Similarly men's ability to acquire land was made possible through marriage, through their affiliation with the female gender. Accordingly both genders needed each other in order to acquire land. This rightfully fits into Hudson-Weems' Africana Womanism theory which emphasises that men and women are compatible with each other, no gender could do without the other.

Some vulnerable groups of women like widows and divorced women still had the opportunity to access land under customary law. Widows with elderly sons continued to access land through their husbands' family as long as they remained in the family of their late husband. Divorced women went back to their natal families and accessed land through their natal family (Mafa, et. al. 2015). Moreover some vulnerable groups like widows and orphans were taken care of by the chief's *zunde ramambo* in Shona and *isiphala senkosi* in Ndebele (chief's granary) (Mafa, et. al. 2015). The traditional society through the *zunde ramambo* social institution safeguarded and provided food for every person despite their social status in life. This was done through the chief's specific fields that were collectively worked by the whole community whose proceeds would be put in a granary to feed such vulnerable groups like widows, orphans and even sojourners. Consequently, the chiefs, male members of the society

provided for the vulnerable groups in Shona traditional society and this prevented such vulnerable groups from becoming destitute and beg for food.

In spite of the concern and welfare for women in pre-colonial Zimbabwean society, women also did not inherit land which was passed through the male line; sons inherited their father's land but not women or daughters. This custom of accessing land through customary law was not peculiar to pre-colonial Zimbabwean society alone but earlier African communities discussed in this chapter also accessed land before colonialism through customary law. The traditional customary law ensured that every member of the community had user rights. Among the traditional Zulu society there was also no property holding in land because all land was accessed through the chief who was the custodian of the land and would allocate it to his subjects, male-headed households. This was the same scenario in Zimbabwe; single men and women did not have entitlement to land (Thorp, 1997). This fully demonstrates that women in traditional African societies, Zimbabwe included, accessed land through their male relations. What has to be noted is the fact that women's user rights in these traditional societies was secure, this is because land was in abundance and men could freely share the land that was allocated to them with their female folk. Also, to be taken note of was the fact that men were allocated land by chiefs through the marriage institution, through their wives. However, this type of arrangement changed with the onslaught of colonialism. The colonial settlers used the lack of registered title deeds for land by the pre-colonial society as a loophole that they took advantage of to consolidate their expropriation of indigenous people's land and supported it with colonial forms of individual ownership which were backed by title deeds (Mafa, et. al. 2015).

The sampled scholars who have discussed gender and land in Zimbabwe in the pre-colonial period have not discussed the depiction of such in literary works of art. The current study critically examines writers of Shona fiction's depiction of the traditions and customs that regulated women's access to land in pre-colonial Zimbabwe.

2.4.2 Gender and Land Ownership in Colonial Zimbabwe

The land between the Zambezi and Limpopo which characterise present day Zimbabwe was colonised by the British and re-named Rhodesia after Cecil John Rhodes (Tshuma, 1997). Rhodesia was colonised by the British in 1890. When the colonialists came to Rhodesia they started expropriating large tracts of land from the indigenous people. They took fertile areas and discarded blacks in arid reserves. The creation of reserves was done through The Native Reserves Order in Council of 1898 which created the notorious Native Reserves for indigenous people only (Mafa, et. al. 2015). This resulted in ad-hoc Native Reserves that were set up in unproductive areas which successively became the present day Communal areas. Through the 1965 Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) Act the Native Reserves were renamed Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) to create trustees for the land. High population densities on TTLs made them degraded 'homelands' (Mafa, et. al. 2015).

Leander Starr Jameson stimulated the settlers to expropriate as much land as they wanted from the indigenous people. “Major Sir John Willoughby was granted 600, 000 acres in Mashonaland and he also bought some land rights that had been given to pioneers who went in search of gold. Furthermore, Rhodes’s surveyor general, on accepting his post, was given 640, 000 acres of land” (Mafa, et. al. 2015: 40). Consequently, the settlers were parcelling out land that belonged to either the Shona or Ndebele with total disregard for indigenous customs on land ownership (Chitiyo, 2000). This meant that the indigenous people no longer had fertile land which they formerly enjoyed and accessed through customary law. There was competition for land between the settlers and the indigenous people. Men therefore could no longer apportion pieces of land to their wives because they also did not have enough land since it had been taken away from them by the colonial settlers. Neither could the chiefs continue to allocate fertile land to household heads for it had been expropriated from indigenous people. Thus the colonial settlers stripped both the indigenous men and women of the land they formerly collectively owned under customary tenure.

Mafa, et. al. (2015) contend that through the Native Reserves Order in Council of 1898 Africans were calculatingly underprivileged as a strategy of forcing them to go and work for the whites in the new colonial establishments of farms, mines and factories. The British government, on the behest of the settler government, was asked to stop the policy of allowing

Africans to buy land adjacent to their farms. The white farmers and administrators used various methods to force indigenous people to work on their farms and projects for no payment. Administrators like the Native Commissioners found their free labour through the chiefs, who would select men from among their subjects to go and work at their instruction (Hughes, 2006). Also, there were predatory raids, *chibharo*, in which physically fit indigenous people, mainly men were conscripted to work for free in European establishments (Austin, 1975; Van Onselen, 1980; Vengeyi, 2015, Mafa, et. al. 2015). These were mainly for short periods on projects such as road building. “Violence was used, including the kidnapping of women until their husbands came to surrender their labour, or holding the chief hostage until the required number of men came forward” (Mafa, et. al. 2015: 40).

The other source of free forced labour was those who defaulted in paying the requisite taxes like the hut tax among others. Extra form of forced free labour was based on tenancy. Those indigenous people who were within the white farmers’ delineated precincts were forced to work for the white colonial farmer for no pay as a form of tenancy. “This was called kaffir farming, and the farmers deliberately built their homesteads within the vicinity of a number of indigenous people’s villages so that they could have easy access to free labour” (Mafa, et. al. 2015: 40). This illustrates the fact that the white settlers who were now land owners, had physical domination and control over the indigenous people. This did not end there, but the colonial settlers continued to promulgate laws that further disenfranchised black people of their land and women suffered the most.

Gudhlanga (2010, 2011, 2013) affirms that colonialism instituted a number of tyrannical laws which further lessened women’s access to land. From the mid-1910s, the colonial government pursued to legitimise customs that would warrant female subordination. This made it difficult for women to use the colonial legal system to their advantage (Schmidt, 1990). Colonialism amended customary law from where women used to benefit from it to the one in which women exercised no power at all and could no longer own property; it further made women’s lives wretched (Gudhlanga, 2013). The colonial system strengthened the economic dependency of women on men. Women were then viewed as minors who had to be under the tutelage of men as second-class citizens. As already indicated in the preceding sections, how the colonial governments passed laws that dispossessed indigenous blacks of

their land in the selected African countries discussed in the previous sections, the colonial government also did the same in Zimbabwe.

In 1930 the British colonial government passed the Land Apportionment Act. Under the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, the right of Africans to land ownership was withdrawn (Chitiyo, 2000; Moyana, 2002; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Since there was competition for land after the passing of this Act, adolescent women who used to grow crops in their mothers' fields could not access land for their own use in communal areas after 1930 (Gaidzanwa, 1994; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Married women, too could not easily access land through their husbands because they too had been dispossessed of the fertile land they previously enjoyed. Furthermore, the men drifted to towns to seek work and women had to till the land to subsidise the poor wages of their husbands. The colonial system also regulated women's mobility so that they remained on the land to support the migrant labour system (Schmidt, 1992; Gaidzanwa, 1981, 1988, 1994; Gudhlanga, 2013; Mafa, et. al. 2015).

After the passing of the Land Apportionment Act, the colonial government also introduced what they called Native Purchase Areas where black men could purchase and own land under freehold tenure. Moyo (1995a) argues that it was only men who had the opportunity to buy land in the Native Purchase Areas and not women. Black women could not procure land in Native Purchase Areas but had access to such land through their male kin. The colonial laws prohibited women from owning land because it considered them to be second-class citizens who were supposed to be under the leadership of male figureheads (Mafa, et. al. 2015). The colonial government's defiance towards women is clearly attested in the Native Commissioner of Hartley, who wrote in 1924 indicating that African women would not be able to conduct their own affairs and they definitely needed male guidance:

Until quite recent years, this was the tradition among our own race. The native women of today have not the brain power or civilisation of the mothers and grandmothers of the present white generation: her brain is not sufficiently balanced to allow her to think and act in all matters for herself, and I consider the male should be encouraged and assisted to exercise tutelage, within all reasonable bounds over his womenfolk (CNC S138/150 Native Commissioner Hartley to Superintendent of Natives Salisbury, 1924).

This vividly illustrates that colonialism brought its Victorian values and heaped them upon traditional customs; these values derided and undermined the female gender among the people of African descent (Gudhlanga, 2010).

Besides all this, the colonial government also introduced the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. This Act was passed as a result of the negative effects of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. The Land Apportionment Act resulted in heavy congestion of people in the reserves and this eventually led to overstocking, overgrazing and soil erosion. Most of the fertile topsoil was eroded leading to the reserves landscape being characterised by *dongas*. The instantaneous response of the colonial government to the problem of land in communal areas was the passing of the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. This Act further imposed and enforced conservation measures on land owned by indigenous people (Vudzijena, 1998). The logic behind this legislation was that land degradation was taking place in the Tribal Trust Lands because of lack of individual title to the land and congestion. Mafa, et. al. (2015) contend that it was mandatory for communal farmers to acquire a 'farming permit' to cultivate land and a 'grazing permit' to graze livestock under the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. Other measures included restrictions on the number of livestock as well as soil and water conservation. Consequently, there was massive culling of indigenous people's livestock, the infamous destocking exercise in which indigenous people were required to remain with just 5 cattle (Vengeyi, 2015). The measures were necessitated by the land and natural resource degradation as a result of overcrowding in the native reserves. However, because the regulations were imposed without consultation, they were resented by the rural people and compliance was erratic (Mafa, et. al. 2015). The resentment to such harsh colonial legislations which deprived indigenous people of their prime land led to discontentment and ultimately the taking up of arms by indigenous people to fight against the colonial government.

The Native Land Husbandry Act also affected women in terms of their rights and access to land through its prominence on individual tenure by registration. According to this Act, a farmer was a man despite the fact that it was women who largely worked and tilled the land. Women were defined or redefined as housewives (Gaidzanwa, 1994; Mafa, et. al. 2015). User rights for all women could not be registered. Thus in colonial Rhodesia black women could

not access freehold land because of the economic, gender and racially prejudiced system of the colonial government and the understanding of the customary laws by the colonial leaders (Gaidzanwa, 1995; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Furthermore, divorced women had to prove that they had custody of the children in order to be given land. In spite of this, Shona or Ndebele tradition stipulates that, the fact that the husband was the one who paid lobola or bride price meant that the children belonged to him. Hence most of the times, divorced women would not have the custody of the children and thus did not qualify to have access to land. On the contrary, divorced men were eligible for customary land rights whether they had custody of the children or not (Mafa, et.al. 2015). Only widows and in exceptional cases, divorced women with custody of the children were granted land which was usually one-third of what men in similar circumstances got (Mafa, et. al. 2015). According to Garbett (cited in Moyo, 1995a), in Mangwende Tribal Area only 16% of women qualified for land under this Act. To make matters even worse the Native Land Husbandry Act also brought additional labour allocations for women but imposed restrictions on land use rights (Moyo, 1995a). People had to practice soil conservation measures and it was mainly women who had to practice these soil conservation measures thereby putting additional labour allocations on the female gender. Moreso, the Act brought too much restrictions on female farming. There was too much controlling of women's agricultural activities. According to Moyo (1995a), prohibitions against using stream banks, dambos and vleis, also meant that women were the most directly disadvantaged and policed, since it is they who cultivated vegetable gardens in such areas. Thus overtime, women's land rights had been consigned to smaller wetland areas as men dominated arable fields and grazing land. This, according to Schmidt (1992) and Moore (1998), reflected an evolving gender division of resource control and roles with regard to food security, labour and trade.

In 1969 the colonial government also passed the Land Tenure Act which cancelled and substituted the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. This Act divided land into European, African and National land. Europeans, who were the minority, owned more land which was very fertile while the black majority owned little land which was infertile. Three quarters of the population which comprised of blacks was confined to one quarter of the total land area in colonial Rhodesia while one quarter of the population which comprised of white minority settlers owned three quarters of the total land area in colonial Rhodesia. This clearly shows that the Rhodesian Front, which was governing colonial Rhodesia by then, desired to

perpetuate racial separation and white supremacy, and further enthused strong nationalist opposition.

The sampled scholars who have discussed gender and land in colonial Rhodesia have highlighted how the colonial government stripped both men and women of the user rights they formally enjoyed under pre-colonial customary tenure. They also demonstrated how the colonialists promulgated laws that gave men more rights of access and individual ownership of land which was not given to women. In addition, they brought to the fore the seemingly secure user rights that women formerly enjoyed but were stripped off by colonial legislations. In other words, colonial legislation worked in cahoots with codified African customary law which was heavily engraved with Victorian values to discriminate against women in land ownership. All the sampled scholars have not discussed gender and land ownership in colonial Rhodesia as depicted in fictional works of art. The present study critically examines selected Shona fiction's depiction of the colonial laws' dispossession of black men and women by reducing them to servitude at the hands of white colonial settlers at commercial farms. Above all, the colonial laws condemned black people to arid areas that were infested with tsetse flies and mosquitoes. The study draws from Shona fictional writers' understanding of the dispossession of land and their possible solutions to redressing the gender and land ownership discourse.

2.4.3 Gender and Land Ownership in Post-Independence Zimbabwe

Zimbabweans waged a protracted liberation struggle against the colonial regime in order to regain their lost land. The liberation struggle started with the Chimurenga war of dispossession in 1896-1897, this has been dubbed the first Chimurenga. The second Chimurenga started in 1966 with the fierce battle at Chinhoyi, and gained momentum in the late 1970s. In 1979 some negotiations on Zimbabwe's independence were completed at Lancaster House in Britain which finally ushered in Zimbabwe's independence. The two major nationalist parties, ZANU PF and ZAPU united and negotiated as the Patriotic Front. However, one of the major contentious issues that made the Lancaster House Conference drag for months was the land issue. There were serious differences between the British and the Patriotic Front over the land issue. The British wanted to safeguard property rights of the whites to be assured; that there would be no massive dispossession of land from white settlers

without adequate compensation (Chitiyo, 2000; Mafa, et. al. 2015). According to Mafa, et. al. (2015: 15) “The Patriotic Front’s proposal was for protection of property from compulsory acquisition except in the public interest, and that compensation would only be paid at the discretion of the government.” The Patriotic Front contended that enlisting constraints on land acquisition would defeat the main purpose of the liberation struggle, which was meant at regaining the fertile land that had been expropriated by the former colonial settlers (Tshuma, 1997). The British argued that a land reform programme was supposed to be carefully planned and executed to evade adverse effects on production. The Lancaster House Constitution therefore outlawed compulsory acquisition of land of any nature. Instead it called for a World Bank policy of ‘willing seller and willing buyer.’ The Lancaster House Constitution thus emphasised the payment of ‘prompt and adequate’ compensation using market prices (Tshuma, 1997; Mafa, et. al. 2015).

The Lancaster House Constitution specified that no provisions would be amended before the expiry of a period of ten years without an affirmative vote in the National Assembly (UNDP, 2002 cited in Mafa, et. al. 2015). It should be noted that the National Assembly had twenty seats (one fifth of the voting rights) that guaranteed land to the Zimbabwean white population for the first twenty years (Mafa, et. al. 2015). According to Mafa, et. al. (2015: 59) “This provision called for the protection of private property and was intentionally encompassed in the constitution by the British as a way of protecting the rights of the white minority in independent.” The nationalist parties therefore conceded the issue of land and accepted independence on the dictates of the Lancaster House Constitution which prohibited them from compulsory acquisition of land soon after independence. Thus the liberation movement abandoned radical land reforms that were preached during the war and adopted the World Bank ‘willing seller willing buyer’, market-bound land acquisition process (Moyo, 2000, 2001). Mafa, et. al. (2015) further attest that only underutilised land could be acquired for agricultural purposes and the acquiring authority had to pay prompt and adequate compensation. Also, it was mandatory for the acquiring authority, the Government of Zimbabwe was supposed to give reasonable intention to acquire the property. Both Zimbabweans and non-Zimbabweans were permitted to remit money paid by way of compensation to the landowners who had willingly sold their land to any country of their choice. This requirement was engrained for 10 years, during which period only a 100% parliamentary majority could amend it (Mafa, et.al. 2015). This means that even after

independence, the government's hands were tied from compulsory acquisition of land that had been the prerequisite of the war of independence.

In post-independent Zimbabwe, a number of laws were passed to repeal the oppressive colonial legal systems that viewed women as perpetual minors who could not own property. Of note was the passing of the Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA) of 1982. Under this law, women were no longer regarded as minors but acquired majority status at 18 which meant that men and women were for the first time legally equal (Mahlaule, 1995). Through this law, women could own property in their own right and open bank accounts; rights they could not exercise under customary law. Another positive development was the passing of the Equal Pay Act of 1982. This meant that women with the same qualifications and same employment as men would get equal salaries with their male counterparts (Ngwenya, 1983). In 1985, the government introduced the Matrimonial Property Rights Act. Previously under customary law, women owned no property as individuals and when divorced they became destitute since property belonged to the husband. In 2001, after the lobbying of the Women and Land Lobby Group (WLLG), the Government Land Reform Policy document included article 3.2.3.5 on Land Tenure Arrangements which states that, 'Land leases and title deeds for married couples should be in both spouses' names' (Government of Zimbabwe, 2001:13). In addition, the Government of Zimbabwe was a signatory to a number of treaties that promoted gender equality like the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), The Beijing Platform for Action among others. Even though women now have majority status, most of the issues governing land allocation and redistribution are still governed by customary law.

It can be concluded that at independence, Zimbabwe inherited a racially-skewed land redistribution pattern which favoured the white minority. It was therefore the government's main objective to redress the colonial social injustice and redistribute land to previously disadvantaged blacks. Racial equity eclipsed gender equity such that issues relating to equity on the basis of gender were not discussed (Gaidzanwa, 1994; Mafa, et. al.). Gender, and specifically women's interests, were not a priority in the land redistribution programme. According to Jacobs (2000:16), 'women's land rights were a fringe issue despite the fact that 70% of agricultural labour is female'. Moyo (1995a) has acknowledged four tenure regimes

in independent Zimbabwe namely; State Lands, Communal Areas (CAs), Commercial Land and Resettlement Area. He argues that these different types of ownership confer different sets of land rights for administration processes among different races and genders. Both the state and private citizens are conferred with different rights within these types of tenure (Moyo, 1995a; Government of Zimbabwe, 1992, Mafa, et. al. 2015).

2.4.3.1 Types of Land Ownership in Post -Independence Zimbabwe

Land ownership patterns in post-independence Zimbabwe is critical in the discourse of gender and land in Zimbabwe. This sections attempts to give an aerial view of the types of land ownership and their implications on gender discourse. Not only do these patterns of the land redistribution programmes that the government embarked on after independence but also demonstrate the magnitude of the skewed ownership patterns that segregate women.

The different types of land ownership fall into four categories: state land, commercial land, communal land and resettlement land. State land constitutes 15% of the land area (Moyo, 1995a). It is managed by parastatals or government departments. The state also owns urban land that is managed by city councils. However, women are left out in such schemes because the male-dominated state administration plays a major role in influencing access to such lands. Land for housing in urban areas was given to men and it is only recently that women have started to have access to such land to buy and register houses in their own names (Moyo, 1995a; Gaidzanwa, 1995).

The second type of land tenure that Moyo cites is Communal tenure which constitutes 41.8% of the total land area and are the former Tribal Trust Lands. According to Moyo (1995a:18) ‘grazing lands are communally managed, while cropping land is allocated to individual families, through men by District Councils which are advised by male dominated Village Development Committees and traditional leaders.’ Unlike men, women in Communal Areas live under customary law and its contemporary interpretation disadvantages them. Many women no longer receive allocations of land from their husbands as was in the traditional tenure. This can largely be attributed to population growth, thereby making land a scarce and limited resource. The men themselves get the little land which they can use with their

families and cannot further subdivide it to give to their wives. Communal areas have large female populations of about 60%, and 40% of communal families are managed by women. In spite of this, women in these Communal Areas have difficulties in accessing land. This has been exacerbated by the continued allocation of land in rural areas by traditional authorities despite the fact that soon after independence in 1980, the government had stripped traditional authorities of this role in land distribution (Goebel, 2005). The introduction of the Traditional Leaders Bill of 1998, which came into effect on 1 January 2000, further marginalised women in Communal Areas. This is because the Act made provision for village level affairs and made traditional leaders responsible for the allocation of land and land use regulation (Goebel, 2005; Mafa, et. al, 2015). Traditional leaders as custodians of patriarchal societies do not entertain women's interests, especially if they contradict traditional views and unfortunately issues to do with land ownership in women are frowned upon.

The other type of land tenure that Moyo (1995a) discusses is commercial land. This type of land tenure constituted 36.4% of the total land area by 1995 (Moyo, 1995a). Commercial land is divided into Large Scale Commercial Farms (LSCF) and Small Scale Commercial Farms (SSCF). The LSCF have been dominated by white men while black men have increasingly managed to acquire land in the SSCF. Most of these farms are under freehold tenure system and black women in particular have least access to land under this system due to socio-economic factors (Moyo, 1995a; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Some of the commercial farms are administered by the state which gives long-term leases to farmers. The Deeds Registry Office only had 3% of the SSCF that were held by female farmers with no husbands by 1995. This percentage was smaller because women did not have the financial resources to acquire land in their own right. Married women have access to this land through their husbands. It has to be noted that even though they do not own land, black women continue to provide the bulk of the seasonal, casual and temporary labour in both LSCF and SSCF (Gaidzanwa, 1995; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Freehold enables one to use the land as collateral for credit and in land markets. Thus black women have been marginalised from the economically productive land as well as access to collateral in the event that they needed credit lines at banks.

The last type of land ownership in this section is the resettlement, a phase before the Fast Land Reform Programme which is referred to here as the pre-Fast Land Resettlement

Programme. There were various types of resettlement schemes but the most popular type was Model A1. Under this Model, land was owned by the state and allocated to household heads through permits. Land allocating officials assumed that the household leader was male (Government of Zimbabwe 1992; Gaidzanwa 1981, 1988, 1994, 1995; Chenaux-Repond, 1993; Jacobs, 1991, 1997, 2000; Goebel, 2005a, 2005b; Matondi, 2012; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Female permits comprised only 2 to 15%, yet female-headed households outside resettlement areas comprised 25% (Sunga, et. al. 1990 cited in Mafa, et. al. 2015; Chenaux-Repond, 1993). Married women became primary holders of land only in the event of their husband's death.

Agrarian reform has also had positive effects on women. Goebel (1999a, 2005b) argues that in Sengezi Resettlement Scheme in Hwedza District, the resettlements had strategies to include women, especially widows, in the redistribution of land. Upon the death of a husband, a widow in resettlement was able to retain the homestead and fields and the permit was even changed into her name. Such an arrangement was untenable under customary tenure. However, these widows still faced other challenges like access to labour and capital. Married women also had the opportunity to grow their own crops that they controlled (Mafa et al; 2015). Goebel (1999a, 2005b) gives a successful beef fattening project which was donor-funded and run by women in Sengezi Resettlement Scheme on an individual basis. Agricultural extension workers interviewed by Goebel (1999a) in Sengezi pointed out that women were the best farmers and constituted the bulk of their master farmer population such that they deserved to be given more land; but this was not possible due to the customary tendencies that prevented women from gaining access to land in their own right. Jacobs (1999) has also noted successful women farmers and argues that 65% of women in Resettlement Areas had their own small plots and recorded higher food production of economic growth.

However, it has to be noted that women's access to land in these Resettlement Areas was highly insecure. Jacobs (2000), in a research conducted in Manicaland and Mashonaland Resettlement Schemes, states that most of the women who were interviewed expressed insecurity not in landholding but in terms of lack of security in marriage. This is because settler women lose access to land upon divorce (Moyo, 1995b; Gaidzanwa, 1994, 1995;

Jacobs, 1991, 2000; Goebel, 2005a, 2005b). Research has also indicated that polygamy increased to 36% in Resettlement Areas (Chenau-Repond, 1993; Gaidzanwa, 1994; Jacobs, 2000). Men married more women because they were considered a source of cheap labour in the newly resettled areas. Thus women were highly disadvantaged in Resettlement Areas; they did not have land of their own in case of marital breakdown.

Despite the measures taken by the government of Zimbabwe to engender gender equity in the land reform process, concerns continued to be raised that land use rights were still biased against women (Mafa, et. al. 2015). The weakness in this system was the assumption that primary land use rights to males on behalf of the family would meet the normal needs of women, namely married, widowed, single and divorced (Vudzijena, 1998). The situation might worsen if the recommendations of the Land Tenure Commission were to be followed since it advocated for the strengthening of customary practices and regulations which vested land use rights and ownership in men (Rukuni, 1994). It also has to be noted that indigenous tenure systems and colonially constructed customary law tended to disregard single parents, and the rights of celibate men and women in common law marriage (Moyo, 1995b). So most single parents were women and it meant that a greater percentage of the female population had no land use rights.

The general resource bias against women in the pre-Fast Track land Reform (before 2001) was confirmed in a study done by the Land Tenure Commission (1994) to ascertain the distribution of land by sex. The findings were as follows: 'women held 23% of land in resettlement areas, 16 percent in communal areas, 5 percent small scale and 25% large scale commercial farming'. The figure of 23% female land beneficiaries more than the 3% in Large Scale Commercial Farms can be explained by the fact that land in resettlement areas was not sold and in LSCF it had to be bought and women did not have such financial resources. Also the figure includes women who got land in their own right and those who got the permits as widows, after the deaths of their husbands. Vudzijena (1998) has also confirmed the findings of the Land Tenure Commission and argues that the first phase of the resettlement programme has not resolved the gender bias in land allocation as men hold 77% of the land in the resettlement sector (Vudzijena, 1998).

Women therefore did not have direct primary land rights in resettlement areas. This is because the first land reforms in the 1980s excluded them, owing to the patriarchal language contained in the planning documents (Chiweshe, 2015). Government policy stated that a settler had to be either married or widowed, which means single unmarried women were discriminated against (Mazhawidza & Manjengwa, 2009a, 2009b).

Chingarande (cited in Mafa, et. al. 2015: 135) has made the following observations about gender issues in the pre-Fast Track period:

- The male registration of land rights is a colonial legacy that has been maintained by the present state.
- Women have limited access to land in previous resettlement schemes, especially communal areas that are patrilineal.
- There is serious tension between official commitment to gender equality on one hand and reluctance to alienate traditionalist structures of local government on the other.
- Resettlement land tenure is state-dominated and tenure-insecure for settlers because it provides loose permits to use land.
- Few women have individual rights to such land and suffer land deprivation where divorce or death of males occurs.
- Women have accessed land indirectly through men and such access is left entirely to the discretion of the husband and can be withdrawn anytime, for any reason.

These observations further attest to the marginalisation of women in land ownership despite legislation that grant equal opportunities and rights to men and women in terms of land ownership.

2.4.3.2 Gender and Fast Track Land Reform

The process of land reform under the ‘willing seller, willing buyer’ was very slow. Instead the government of Zimbabwe passed the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 which was implemented in 2000 (Mangezvo, 2013). This Land Acquisition Act enabled the government

to compulsorily acquire land, and it was only passed after 1990, in line with the clause on ‘willing seller willing buyer’ in the Lancaster House Constitution that could only be amended after 10 years. Most scholars concur that Fast Track Land Reform process was characterised by lack of planning and was marred by violence. According to Goebel (2005a, 2005b), these conditions marginalised women as new settlers and favoured male war veterans and other militant groups. It should also be noted that the objectives of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme did not include women. Matondi (2012) has also observed the marginalisation of women in the Fast Track Land Reform Programme and states that it was a revolution without change in women’s land rights. In other words, fast track land reform did nothing in improving women’s access to or ownership of land.

The Presidential Land Review Committee headed by Charles Utete (2003) noted that the number of women allocated land under Fast Track was very low countrywide. This is despite the fact that the Utete Commission recommended that land should be registered in both the names of the wife and the husband and that a quota of 40% of land allocation and funding should be reserved for women. Women-headed households who benefited under Model A1 constituted about 18%, while women beneficiaries under A2 constituted only 12%. A number of scholars agree that the beneficiaries of this programme are largely assumed to have had connections within the ruling party or government (Utete, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). This means more women could have been side-lined owing to lack of those connections. In its examination of the implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, the Utete commission has emphasised the need for ‘women farmers’ to have greater opportunities in terms of access to inputs and labour-saving technologies, land ownership, information and extension services and education (Utete, 2003; Mafa, et. al. 2015). However, it has to be noted that up to this present date no attempt has been made to implement the conclusions of the Utete Report with respect to women.

The sampled scholars who have discussed gender and land in the prevalent tenure regimes in independent Zimbabwe have not gone further to discuss how writers of fiction depict this in their works of art. The present study investigates the depiction of gender and land ownership in the different tenure regimes in Zimbabwe. It also examines how the writers of fiction depict the historical processes that influence gender and land ownership.

2.5 Implications of Land Ownership Patterns in Contemporary Zimbabwe

The various types of tenure regimes that have been discussed in the preceding section highly disadvantage women's access and right to land. Women's groups have challenged this gender disparity in land allocation. Women's Action Group (WAG) made representations to government concerning women's land rights. Of particular importance was the contribution of the Women and Land Lobby Group (WLLG) which was a group of women activists who were committed to the land issue. They critiqued the government policy papers since 1998 and their efforts yielded a few positive results and women still face some challenges in proclaiming equality in land allocation on gender basis in a country that quickly falls back on customary law when faced with defending men's persistent domination in land ownership (Mafa, et. al. 2015). Jacobs (2000) has also noted the efforts of the WLLG and states that the group campaigned for a third of the land which had been designated for resettlement to male ex-combatants to be allocated to women in their own right. Instead of WLLG to advocate for equal land share they were only asking for women to be given just a third of the land which disadvantages women already.

Mafa, et.al. (2015) argue that in spite of the inroads in achieving female representation in land distribution patterns as well as the constitution stating in section 23 (1) and (2) that no one should be discriminated on the basis of race, colour, sex or creed, Zimbabwe still uses some legal instruments that discriminate against women. Sub-sections 23 (3) a, b and f still discriminate against women through customary law. Traditional customary law in Zimbabwe was flexible, but codified customary law was cast in stone and is very rigid. Codified customary law in Zimbabwe is patriarchal in nature and patriarchy is based on the principle of discrimination on the basis of one's sex (Musasa Project, 2003). When such laws are still at play, it means that women's access to resources like land will always remain a challenge.

Despite the passing of laws such as the Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA) in which both men and women are supposed to enjoy equal legal majority status upon attaining the age of 18, it can be seen that in the case of Zimbabwean, that is not what obtains. Gudhlanga (2011) argues that the majority status is only in theory because some legal cases that have gone to the courts of Zimbabwe still attest that customary law is still in control. Under codified customary law, women still continue to be perpetual minors despite the passing of the Legal

Age of Majority Act. Goredema (unpublished) gives a list of cases in which women were discriminated against by Zimbabwe's courts despite the passing of LAMA in 1982. In the case of *Magaya v Magaya*, the Zimbabwe Supreme Court (comprising of five judges) ruled unanimously that only men could inherit under customary law (The Supreme Court of Zimbabwe, 1999; UNICEF cited in Goredema, unpublished). The judge presiding over the case held that, 'The claimant is a lady and therefore cannot be appointed heir to her father's estate when there is a man' (Mazambani, 2006:8). The women in the above cases were discriminated against in inheriting or administering their deceased father's or husband's estate (Gudhlanga, 2011).

To add to this, the state continues to follow customary law as far as land ownership is concerned. Women's rights and access to land are still mediated by their male relatives. This is because of the government's lack of commitment in redressing gender imbalances in land ownership. Consequently, women's demands for land have been neglected by the state which does not want to lose support among its male-dominated political party structures (Moyo, 1995a, 1995b; Mafa, et. al. 2015). This was clearly brought out by the then Vice President, Joseph Msika, who when asked at a press conference why women did not have land rights said, 'because I would have my head cut off by men if I gave women land...men would turn against the government...giving wives land, or even granting joint titles, would destroy the family' (Sayagues cited in Jacobs, 2000:136). Contrary to the above statement, the then Minister of Agriculture, Dr Joseph Made, argued that: "Since the family is traditionally made up of two partners, government cannot say which partner should come forward to apply for land. Such specifics should be left out to the families to decide..." (WLLG, 2001a: 9).

All these contesting views show that there is no clear-cut policy on women's access to land. This then makes women's negotiation for their land use rights very problematic. The Land Tenure Commission of 1994 did not propose legislative and administrative changes which would allocate women rights in respect of land and property; instead it insisted that 'family rights' in land be allocated customarily. The neglect of women's land issues by the state is not unique to Zimbabwe alone, but as has been discussed in preceding sections, is also characteristic of other African countries, Latin America and South East Asia. In India Bina Agarwal was told by a Minister of Agriculture, "Are you suggesting that women should be

given rights in land? What do women want? To destroy the family?” (Agarwal, 1994a: 53). The discrimination of women is exacerbated by the reintroduction of traditional leaders in land allocation in Zimbabwe’s communal areas. This male-dominated leadership seeks to promote patriarchal beliefs in land allocation and redistribution. This scenario therefore demonstrates that women still have a long battle to fight in order to be finally free from customary law interpretations by the patriarchal leadership.

The sampled scholars who have discussed gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe have not linked that to what is being produced by writers of fictional works. However, the current research focuses on gender and land ownership as portrayed in selected novels. It proceeds from earlier research that is based on reality and then goes further by critically examining how writers of fiction depict historical reality on gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. It also gives a holistic picture of the history of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe from pre-colonial times to date and critiques how Shona fiction handles this.

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter has highlighted that there is a lot of evidence from Asia, Africa and Latin America which demonstrate that women are disadvantaged in both statutory and customary land tenure systems (Agarwal, 1994; Lastarria-Cornhiel, 1997; Kevane, 2004; Deere & Leon, 2001; Deere, et. al. 2012). The household is not a level terrain for women to enjoy land rights. Thus strengthening household rights to land does not automatically imply that women within those households have equal and secure land rights (Kieran, et. al. 2015). Even the current land grabs in third world countries continue to marginalise women from the land resource. This is because these land grabs are managed by male dominated African governments that are selling large tracks of land to corporate foreign companies. This new form of dispossession continues to marginalise women (Verma, 2014).

This chapter has also stated that the most successful countries in achieving joint titles are Rwanda, Bolivia and Peru. This has been accomplished through top-down comprehensive land titling programmes (Wiig, 2012). However the Rwanda, Bolivia and Peru have promoted joint titles and not individual titles for women. Under joint title ownership men still

have an upper hand. Whenever there are some challenges in the joint ownership titles women usually suffer due to that patriarchal nature of these societies.

The chapter has given firstly a global overview of gender and land ownership before narrowing down to Zimbabwe. The historical overview and processes of gender and land ownership discussed in this chapter will be used to assess the authenticity of the portrayal of gender and land ownership in literature. Since literature is shaped by the environment from which it emerges it is necessary to see if there is a typical depiction of gender and land ownership in the sampled literature texts to be discussed. It is also notable that among all the sampled authors who have researched on gender and land ownership in Asia, Latin America and Africa there has been no research on gender and land in works of fiction that was done. The present study therefore endeavours to build on the historical reality presented by the reviewed scholars and critique the interface between lived experiences on gender and land and its impact on gender and land ownership as depicted in selected Shona fiction. The study also examines the various responses to the land question particularly the fictional writers' solutions regarding the gender and land ownership debate. It also hopes to tap from the different views presented by writers of selected fictional narratives on the complex nature of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean history. The possible solutions proffered by selected fictional writers might help in resolving the current debate on gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe and the rest of the world. The following chapter discusses the theoretical framework that informs the study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter gives a review of related literature on gender and land ownership in various regions of the world in general, and Zimbabwe in particular. This chapter discusses the theoretical framework that guides the study. It focuses on African-centred approaches used to critique writers' trajectories of gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. It elucidates the theoretical underpinnings that inform the study. This chapter, therefore, gives a detailed explanation of the critical approaches adopted in this study. It also justifies why African-centred approaches are better placed to critique the gender and land ownership question within the context of African lived experiences. The present study is informed by Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity. It is grounded in theories that are African-centred and attempts to analyse and understand African phenomena from the vantage point of Africans.

Employing African-centred theoretical approaches is relevant to this study which discusses gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. African-centred approaches do ground the study in African culture and history and therefore, are necessary in this study for they assist in understanding and grounding the study in the African people's culture and the historical processes they have evolved through. Rootedness in African-centred approaches has also been supported by Adesina (2008: 135) who highlights that, "An intellectual standpoint derived from a rootedness in the African conditions, centering of African ontological discourses and experiences as the basis of one's intellectual work is particularly crucial to any study of African literature." This therefore, makes it imperative for this study to be rooted in African-centred theories like Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity in its analysis of gender and land ownership in selected Shona fictional works.

3.1 Africana Womanism

Africana Womanism has been defined as:

Coming out of the rich legacy of African womanhood, and is an authentic paradigm with its own unique agenda true to the prioritisation of race, class, and gender. From its very historical and cultural context, it is family centred, not female centred, and it is first and foremost concerned with race empowerment rather than female

empowerment, which in reality, is a part of, not separate from, the holism of Africana life (Hudson-Weems, 2007: 23).

Hudson-Weems further succinctly defines the Africana Womanism paradigm as:

Neither an outgrowth nor an addendum to feminism, Africana Womanism is not Black feminism, or Walker's Womanism that some Africana women have come to embrace. Africana Womanism is an ideology created and designed for all women of African descent. It is grounded in African culture, and therefore, it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs, and desires of African women ... The primary goal of Africana women then is to create their own criteria for assessing their realities, both in thought and in action (Hudson-Weems, 2004a: 82).

Hence Africana Womanism is a theory which understands that African women are under the tripartite domination of race, class and gender and would help the present study to comprehend Shona fiction in its relation to gender and land ownership.

Even though some critics like Mangena (2013) may argue that women on the African continent do not suffer from racism because most of the countries are now independent, it is a fact that after achieving flag independence most African countries are still suffering from the effects of colonialism. The land alienation which was caused by colonialism is still prevalent in Africa; most African countries are still struggling to reclaim the land that was taken away from them, both men and women. This, therefore, makes Africana Womanism theory relevant to this study for it understands that African women have three cards that militate against them. Aldrige referring to Hudson-Weems' theory observes this tripartite oppression and avers that, "Whilst voicing the centrality of race, she is also cognizant of the Africana woman's predicament within the dominant culture as being that of racism, classicism, and sexism" (cited in Hudson-Weems, 2004b: xiii). This makes the Africana womanist theory very relevant in tackling African problems such as the gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction.

Africana Womanism has been hailed as a theory that is meant to give a more realistic understanding of gender relations between men and women of African descent. It is a theory which explains the male-female relations from the context and history of African people and their culture (Makaudze, 2014). Utilising such a theory in this study which focuses on gender

and land ownership is of paramount importance for it brings to the fore the Afro-centred relations between men and women as they collectively own land in African traditional culture. It is therefore, necessary to use this theory instead of mainstream feminism which does not focus on the plight of the African people. The succeeding section briefly discusses the preference of using Africana Womanism in this study to feminism.

3.1.1 Africana Womanism Versus Feminism

The study prefers to use Africana Womanism which is rooted in African culture and history instead of feminism. A theory that has Africa at the centre makes it more relevant and applicable to the study of African literature in general and Shona fiction in particular. Conversely, feminism is not grounded in African culture and history and therefore cannot give solutions to the problems of gender and land ownership in an African context (Sofola, 1992). In this study Africana Womanism is used because it makes it possible to objectively understand the condition of African women within their unique experiences, needs and aspirations. In view of the fact that the study is on the portrayal of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction, it is essential to examine the selected works in the context of Africana Womanism because it places the African woman and man in the context of African culture rather than feminism which is a western oriented ideology. Hudson-Weems (2007: 22) argues that “Africana Womanism then stands as an exemplar for such a strategy for our liberation via collective struggle with Africana men, women and children.” The issue of land deprivation that most African countries have gone through calls for such a theory that understands that men, women and children have been deprived of their birth right, which is the land; and they are, therefore, in the struggle of reclaiming that land. Africana Womanism, therefore, is the accurate theory which enables the current study to critique gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction.

Hudson-Weems (1997: 79) affirms that “Africana Womanism commands an African-centered perspective of African women’s lives...their historical, current, and future interaction with their community, which includes their male counterparts.” Thus unlike feminism which focuses on female emancipation while side-lining men, Africana Womanism weaves in African men in their struggle against the tripartite domination of race, class and gender. Africana Womanism, for that reason, becomes relevant to the present study in which

both African men and women have been dispossessed of their land by colonialism and are in the struggle together of reclaiming their land which was taken away from them by former colonial.

Also the feminist movement did not do much to address the needs and aspirations of black women and other women of colour (Blackmon, 2008). Instead, it focused on the needs of middle class white women in Britain and America in the guise of a movement for the emancipation of women globally (Hudson-Weems, 1993, 2004a; Ebunoluwa, 2009). Accordingly, because of the inadequacies of feminism in addressing the needs and aspirations of black women and men, it is necessary to use a theory which covers that gap, Africana Womanism. Through Africana Womanism “Africana women continue to prioritize obstacles in their society- the lack of equal access to career opportunities, fair treatment of their children, and equal employment for their male counterparts” (Hudson-Weems, 2004a: 49). Hence the Africana women realise that their whole nation, including their children and men, has suffered and understand that in order for them to have better living conditions their focus should not only been on emancipating the female gender but the male gender as well. To this effect, Lewis (1970: 15) asserts, “As a Black Woman I view my role from a Black perspective- the role of Black women is to continue the struggle in concert with Black men for the liberation and determination of Blacks.” Feminism, therefore, does not take cognisance of these desires and aspirations; it is only Africana Womanism that calls for the emancipation of the entire Black race. This makes the theory relevant to this study which endeavours to discuss selected Shona fiction’s analysis of racial and gender imbalances in land ownership.

Feminism, as a theoretical concept, views men as the enemy. On the other hand, women of African descent do not view men as the enemy. This is also brought out by Ladner (cited in Ntiri-Quenum, 2007: 314) who argues that “Black women do not perceive their enemy to be black men, but rather the enemy is considered to be oppressive forces in the larger society which subjugate black men, women and children.” Contrariwise, feminism excludes men in women’s struggles, whilst in:

Africana Womanist circles men are not excluded from women's issues. On the contrary, they are invited as partners in problem-solving and social change. The African woman joins the common struggle to end discrimination against women ... [emphasises] the importance of motherhood and the value of child-bearing capacity... [which are deemed] primary to meet community needs (Ntiri-Quentin, 2007: 315).

Furthermore, Hudson-Weems has underlined the exclusionary nature of feminism which leaves out men and focuses on women. She contends that, "The mainstream feminist's assertion is for equal and individual rights for white women in a patriarchy where white men have monopolised power. Her fight against her white male counterpart has to do with her submission of rights and property and her subsequent inferior status in society attributable to years of domination by males in her life" (Hudson-Weems, 2004a: 7). Contrary to this, African women do not fight for power from their male counterparts, traditionally Africa has been awash with a long history of female chiefs and queens who presided over chiefdoms namely, Queen Nzinga of Angola, the queens of Egypt and the political leader Nehanda of Zimbabwe among others (Wheeler, 2007; Gudhlanga, 2013). The African women have a different approach and attitude towards the men in their lives; they have always worked with them as partners. Africana Womanism, consequently, understands the history of Africana men and women and therefore is relevant in the analysis of gender and land ownership in an African context, in which both men and women have been dispossessed of their land by the white race and are united in the struggle to reclaim their land after gaining political independence.

It is therefore necessary to weave in the Africana Womanist theory which recognises that both men and women are together in the struggle to fight the ills of colonialism which has resulted in the dispossession of land among men and women on the African continent. Such a theory is pertinent in redressing the racial and gender imbalances in land ownership in African countries that have suffered land deprivation due to colonial legislations. The theory therefore is relevant in discussing gender and land ownership in Shona fiction.

Feminism and all its different brands does not focus on the aspirations of black women who have experienced the challenges of an unjust society either in the diaspora or on the African

continent (Hudson-Weems, 1993). To clearly bring to the fore the shortcomings of feminism and its brands in discussing African problems, Hudson-Weems argues that, “It becomes apparent, then, that neither the term black feminism nor African feminism is sufficient to label women of such complex realities as Africana women, particularly as both terms, through their key terms, align themselves with feminism” (Hudson-Weems, 1993: 20). It is therefore prudent to use a theory like Africana Womanism which transmits a “spirit that is more in tune to the realities of a racially unjust society” (Ntiri-Quenum, 2007: 313). Africana Womanism is therefore an appropriate theory to discuss gender and land ownership in Shona society that has undergone the challenges of colonialism and racism.

Africana Womanism and feminism have separate agendas. To this, Hudson-Weems claims that:

... and the mainstream feminists have two separate agendas in terms of procedure, orientation and issues. To be sure, the chief role of the Africana women is to aid in bringing to fruition the liberation of her entire race... the feminist generally assumes that the cultural ideas and constructs of the two are the same, meaning her position and the definitive one, and all others must follow suit (Hudson-Weems, 1993: 51).

Thus feminism focuses on liberating women only; white middle class women for that matter while Africana Womanism calls for the total liberation of the entire race. Africana Womanism is therefore relevant to this study which endeavours to discuss the colonial injustices in land dispossession and ultimately the reclamation of that land by blacks in Zimbabwe.

Moyana (2012: 63) succinctly summarises the difference between feminism and Africana Womanism when she affirms that, “Unlike feminism, which intends to channel its energy in the struggle against the male principle, while projecting the woman as the hapless victim of masculine intransigence, Africana Womanism constitutes a resonant theoretical alternative that promotes harmonisation of participatory gender efforts.” Moyana highlights that Africana Womanism is not exclusionary but incorporates the male gender in eradicating the challenges that women face. This is relevant to this study which discusses gender and land ownership in Shona fiction, the land dispossession has affected both men and women, hence in redressing the racial and gender imbalances in land ownership men are also a vital component of this struggle.

The differences in orientation between Africana Womanism and feminism make it prudent for the present study to use Africana Womanism which is grounded in the African people's culture and history. As Sofola (1992) argues that the solutions of a people's problems come from their history and culture, and this makes Africana Womanism an appropriate theory for this study. After discussing the main differences between Africana Womanism and feminism it is necessary to briefly discuss the tenets of the theory and how they are relevant to the analysis of selected Shona fiction.

3.1.2 The Main Tenets of Africana Womanism

Mangena (2013: 2) argues that Hudson-Weems did not create a legacy of Africana Womanism but has "observed the Africana women, documented their reality and refined a paradigm relative to who they are, what they do, and believe in as a people." Hudson-Weems therefore just observed the African people's lives and then named it Africana Womanism which was already in existence since it encompasses the African people's way of life. She identified eighteen descriptors of the theory namely; self namer, self-definer, family centred, in concert with males in the struggle, flexible roles, genuine sisterhood, strength, male compatible, respected and recognised, whole and authentic, spirituality, respectful of elders, adaptable, ambitious and mothering and nurturing (Hudson-Weems, 2004a: 55-74). The current study exploits these descriptors to examine gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction and evaluate the selected writers' contribution to the land ownership debate in the context of Africana Womanism. Some of the descriptors will be sampled and their relevance discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

At the core of the Africana Womanism theory is self-naming and self-definition. Africana Womanism is aimed at seizing the opportunity to name and define the African woman by situating her in the context of her unique experiences. Hudson-Weems contends that even during the time of slavery Africana women were named and defined as bearers of children who would become beasts of burden for the slave master (Hudson-Weems, 2004a). The Africana women never regarded themselves as such but named and defined themselves as women and mothers and not as a property. The Africana woman therefore defines and names

herself in the context of African culture and history. This is important in analysing gender and land ownership in Shona fiction in the sense that when the colonialists saw the African women as an oppressed lot who were their husbands' property through the payment of lobola (bride price), the African women did not see themselves as such. Instead they viewed themselves as married and respectable women who contributed to the well-being of the family. These women who regarded themselves as part of the family really understood the challenges of dispossession of land that their men went through. Furthermore, when they were redefined as housewives by the colonialists through the 1951 Land Husbandry Act, African women still participated in fending for the family together with their men. Hence African women had to be properly named and defined. To this effect Hudson-Weems asserts that,

Africana Womanism emerged from the acknowledgement of a long standing authentic agenda for that group of women of African descent who needed only to be properly named and officially defined according to their unique historical and cultural matrix, one that would reflect the co-existence of a man and a woman in a concerted struggle for the survival of their entire family or community (Hudson-Weems, 2007: 289).

Thus Africana Womanism is a relevant theory that recognises the unique history and culture of African men and women who have undergone racial prejudices and land dispossession under colonialism. Since it is rooted in a people's culture and history, it is relevant in the criticism of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction.

The Africana womanist is family-centred; she is not concerned with her individual self as feminists do but is concerned with the well-being of her whole family, husband and children included. Her worldview is rooted in the philosophy of holistic harmony rather than the individualistic isolation of Europe (Sofola, 1992). To this effect, Hudson-Weems avers that the Africana womanist "realises that her individual safety and survival are strongly affected by the overall struggle of her community. Until her entire people are free, she is not free. Her struggle is directly intertwined with that of her people" (Hudson-Weems, 2004a: 59). This therefore is pertinent in the discussion of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean literature in which both men and women are struggling to regain their lost land.

Africana womanists are not radical but believe in working for the well-being of the family and the whole community. They understand the historical processes that have disadvantaged them as a nation, both male and female. Consequently, they believe in the removal of such processes that have oppressed both the male and the female Africans. To this effect one commentator affirms;

Personal and racial experiences... will be factors responsible for the evolution of Africana Womanism. Therefore, legitimate concerns of the Africana woman are issues to be addressed within the context of African culture and history. Africana womanists do not believe in 'bra burning.' They believe in womanhood, the family and society (The Nigerian Daily Times cited in Hudson-Weems, 2004a: 11).

Africana Womanism, therefore, takes cognisance of the historical processes that have disadvantaged the African people as a whole. This theory is very relevant to the discussion of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction. The African people who have been dispossessed of their land are fighting to regain this land, the African women are not fighting against their men but realise that they have to join hands and reclaim the land so that their whole nation is free for themselves, their children and their husbands. In view of that, Africana Womanism is relevant in the struggle of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction.

The Africana womanist is also in concert with males in a broader struggle for humanity and the liberation of the African people (Hudson-Weems, 2001, 2004a). Unlike the feminists whose struggle is independent of men, the Africana womanist invites men in her struggle. Africana womanists believe that "emancipation is unattainable until the basic rights are provided to all people (Ajai cited in Ntiri-Quenum, 2007). Africana womanists do not hold any grudges against the Africana men as is the case with their western counterparts. In the context of post-colonialism and even post-independence women are willing to work with their male counterparts. These women are freely forgiving as they forget the injustices perpetrated by the 'new' African man who has been shaped by colonialism. African women realise the damage inflicted by colonialism and therefore do not hold any grudges against their men. Thus African women are family oriented hence the seeming oblivion of injustices perpetrated to them by their African men. African women realise that in order for society to be functional it emanates from the basic unit of society, the family. A functional family result in a functional society. The theory appears to work well in an African set up in which women are able to address the current relationship between African men and women. By addressing

the injustices perpetrated by colonialism the African women are seeing the bigger picture not narrowing down to gender wars. Instead they work together to fight the social ills like colonialism and its concomitant effects that have affected their communities.

Realising the unique character of the Africana womanist's survival strategy, Hudson-Weems affirms that:

The Africana womanist, focusing on her particular circumstances, comes from an entirely different perspective, one which embraces the concept of collectivism for the entire family in its overall liberation struggle for survival, thereby resolving the question of her place in women's issues" (Hudson-Weems, 2004a: 8).

Accordingly, Muwati and Mguni (2012: xvii) conclude that the strategic value of African womanhood championed in Africana Womanism can become a potent resource in Africa's quest for liberation. The continent can therefore be liberated through Africana womanist theory which calls for both men and women to fight the injustices that have affected them over a long colonial history. The exclusion of either category mars the process and prolongs the struggle for total liberation. This demonstrates a theory in which men and women embrace their struggles and fight them together. Such a theory becomes pertinent in resolving the racial and gender imbalances in land ownership in Zimbabwean literature.

Flexible role playing is another typical characteristic of Africana Womanism. Even in traditional societies African men and women worked together and shared roles that were not cast in stone until the coloniser redefined (re-contextualised) the working together as some form of labour provision on the part of women (and children) when women had to shoulder most of the burdens on their own. Even in the African-American history of slavery where both men and women had to work in the plantations they still had flexible roles (Hudson-Weems, 2004a, 2011). Thus the roles in an Africana community were not clearly defined as male, or female. Women could only not share their biological role of child-bearing with men but all the other roles that had nothing to do with their biological make-up were easily shared between men and women. In a similar fashion, in African traditional society, the roles of men and women were not cast in stone, women could play men's roles and vice versa as long as it did not have to do with their biological make-up like child-bearing. Among the Shona and the Ndebele people of Zimbabwe "daughters could become sons and consequently male; and

where daughters and women in general could be husbands and consequently male” (Furusa, 2006: 3). Among the Shona and the Ndebele all people from one’s mother’s side including males are responsible for mothering someone. Similarly all people from one’s father’s side both brothers and sisters are responsible for fathering someone (Furusa, 2006). Also, when one is married into a family all her husband’s relatives whether male or female are her husbands, and also when one marries into a family all his wife’s relations brothers and sisters are all his wives. Amadiume (1987) has also observed such flexible gender boundaries among the Ibo of Nigeria when she writes of “female husbands and male daughters.” This therefore signifies flexible role playing between men and women in an African context. Thus the rigid gender roles that are at the forefront of the feminist movement are foreign to African communities.

Furthermore, Africana Womanism with its flexible roles between men and women is ideal for the criticism of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction. Both men and women can easily exchange roles for the benefit of the community. Even the liberation struggle which finally ushered in the independence of Zimbabwe clearly demonstrated that women were not confined to the domestic sphere but also participated together with men at the war front (Gudhlanga, 2013). Consequently, both men and women could take advantage of the relaxed roles in Africana Womanism and jointly participated in the reclamation of their land which was expropriated from them by the colonial masters. Both men and women are together in this struggle to resolve the historical, racial and gender imbalances in land ownership. Africana Womanism therefore, becomes a pertinent theory in critiquing gender and land ownership in Shona fiction.

To add to this, women in Africana Womanism are strong; they are not weak and waiting to be protected by their male counter-parts. This resilience and strength of Africana women emanated from the long history of slavery in which they persevered centuries of servitude for themselves and their families, children and husbands included. Hudson-Weems (2004a: 66) contends that witnessing her men suffering under slavery “the Africana womanist has continued to demonstrate her strength and steadfastness in protecting the vulnerabilities of her family.” Similarly, the African woman on the African continent has also continued to show this steadfastness of looking after her family whilst witnessing her husband suffering

under colonialism. Thus women of African descent are not docile but are very strong and have endured the challenges of colonialism and slavery. Such an Afro-centred theory which is deeply rooted in the history and culture of African people is relevant to the analysis of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction. The study will assess to what extent writers of Shona fiction demonstrate how the strong African women can join hands with men in redressing the colonial and gender imbalances in land ownership in Zimbabwe.

The Africana womanist is also male-compatible and desires a positive relationship with the Africana men and thrive together to build a family. In this family she is respected and recognised, and respectful of elders. She is also spiritually grounded, she believes in a supreme being directing her family life. Furthermore, she values motherhood, mothering and nurturing her own children in particular and humankind in general. Hudson-Weems states that the Africana woman:

Enjoying her role, she both encourages her own and sacrifices herself in executing her duty to humankind...She is consistent in doing what must be done for the survival of the family, a commitment grounded in and realised through a positive sense of history, familiness, and security, of which true mothering and nurturing provide, and which the true Africana womanist embodies.” (Hudson-Weems, 2004a: 73).

Africana womanist theory therefore is relevant for the discussion of gender and land ownership in an African set up like Zimbabwe. It does not denigrate motherhood, thus the African women can be mothers, wives and at the same time fighting the struggle to liberate themselves and their men from the tripartite subjugation of race, class and gender which has eventually dispossessed them of their land. In that respect it is a very relevant theory for critiquing gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction.

The preceding section has highlighted some of the tenets of Africana Womanism and how these can be used in the criticism of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction. The succeeding section briefly ties up the significance of Africana Womanism theory in the current study.

3.1.3 The Significance of Africana Womanism

Africana Womanism should be hailed for realising that women are not a monolithic block but are divided by race, class, culture and life experiences (Ferris cited in Mangena, 2013). The theory isolates African women from the general category of women that includes non-African women. The fact that it separates African women from the general block is a positive note for it realises that women of African descent have their own experiences, desires and aspirations different from non-African women. Additionally, “Africana Womanism is not just about African women but all African people regardless of their gender or generation, hence the ordering of its priorities in terms of race, class and gender” (Gwekwerere, Magosvongwe & Mazuru, 2012). It deals with continental as well as diasporic Africans and focuses on the gender aspect that is critical to this theory and not female liberation (Reed, 2001). This, therefore, makes the theory which relates to men and women of African descent much more relevant to the discussion of gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction.

The theory also “fills the void created by the dissociation of Africana women from movements that foster inequality and keep them languishing on the fringes of the white world.” (Ntiri-Quenum, 2007: 315). Africana Womanism therefore enables women of African descent to be the centre of discussions instead of being at the margins of society where they have been side-lined for years by western-oriented theories of criticism. Also, it is relevant for it identifies and locates the woman as the central subject, a phenomenon not recognised by feminist interpretations of womanhood. Hudson-Weems also reiterates this when she states that: “The Africana womanist theory has therefore, the potential of effecting change and making meaningful contributions to the Afrocentric discourse on Africana men and women” (Hudson-Weems, 2007: 294-295). Such an Afro-centred theory is relevant to the discussion of how men and women in an African context relate when they try to reclaim their birth right, the land which was taken away from them by long years of colonial subjugation. The theory, therefore, is rooted in African history and culture and is relevant to this study which discusses gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. The succeeding section discusses another Afro-centred paradigm which informs this study, Afrocentricity.

3.2 Afrocentricity

The other Afro-centred theory which informs this study is Afrocentricity. This theory was developed by Molefe Kete Asante (1980), an African American scholar of excellent academic repute based at Temple University in Philadelphia, United States of America. Asante has affirmed how the theory evolved when he said, “Although the term Afrocentricity has been used greatly before 1980, by Asante in the 1970s, Kwame Nkrumah in the 1960s, the intellectual idea did not have substance as a philosophical concept until 1980” (Asante, 2009: 1). Asante finally developed the Afrocentricity paradigm as we know it today even though the term had been widely used earlier by other scholars, and Asante himself before 1980. This Afrocentric paradigm has really opened doors for the criticism and discernment of African literature and has tremendously helped in removing the marginalisation of the criticism African literature from Eurocentric paradigms. Olusola (2010) has also observed the importance of Afrocentricity in the criticism of African literature and avers that, “Afrocentricity has since started the crusade that will free African literature from the bastardizing grip of Eurocentric criticism which has shredded the criticism of African literature into ‘Larsonist,’ ‘African Eurocentric,’ ‘Bolekaja’ and Ogunnist” (Olusola, 2010: 101). Afrocentricity, therefore, has embarked on an exercise of granting sovereignty to the criticism of African literature; not perpetuating its view as an appendage of European literature, viewed as sub-standard and always at the margins of other literatures. For that reason Afrocentricity becomes a relevant theory for this study which critiques gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean literature.

Afrocentricity is viewed as an “intellectual perspective deriving its name from the centrality of African people and phenomena in the interpretation of data” (Asante cited in Hudson-Weems, 2007: 29). It is based on the idea that African people should re-assert a sense of agency in order to achieve sanity. As a paradigm, Afrocentricity further “enthrones the centrality of the African, that is, black ideals and values, as experienced in the highest forms of African culture, and activates consciousness as a functional aspect of any revolutionary approach to phenomena” (Asante, 2009: 1). It privileges African agency within the context of African history and culture (Asante, 2007: 2). Afrocentricity, to put it in Mazama’s words does not allow Africans “to agree to footnote status in the White Man’s Book” (Mazama, 2003: 4). Such a theory which places African people, their culture and history at the centre is very relevant to the present study which discusses gender and land ownership in selected

Shona fiction. The theory therefore does not marginalise Africans and relegate them to the role of victim and objecthood but puts them at the centre as subjects and people who can chart their own history and destiny. Consequently, the criticism of African literature and its portrayal of gender and land ownership should not emphasise Africans the victimhood of a people perpetually dispossessed of their land, but as agents who can rise up to the occasion and chart their own destiny in rewriting their own history and reclaiming the land that was taken away from them by the former colonisers. This study, therefore, evaluates the selected writers of Shona fiction's ability to place Africans at the centre of the narratives of their fictional works. After highlighting the concept of Afrocentricity it is imperative to briefly discuss the individual tenets of the theory and demonstrate their relevance to the analysis of selected Shona fiction.

3.2.1 The Main Tenets of Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity as constructed by Asante, sought to address the world order by repositioning the African person and the African reality from the margins of European thought, attitude and doctrines to a centred, therefore positively located place within the realm of science and culture (Asante, 1980, 1998, 2007, 2009). By positively locating Africans:

Afrocentricity begins with the idea that African people should be at the center of their own history in every conceivable situation where Africans are involved. It is not the 're-centering of blackness' that is at the heart of Afrocentricity but the re-centering of the African person in the center of his or her own historical context, reality, and time...We are not on the margins of any other people's history; we are profoundly in our time and space if we view ourselves outside of this reality, we are disoriented and decentered (Asante, 2007: 24).

Asante, therefore, brings to the fore the fact that Africans should be at the centre of their history, they should not be marginalised but should be at the forefront of rewriting their history and charting their destiny. Thus Afrocentricity, as Magosvongwe (2013) argues, strives to liberate Africans from being labelled the other. It provides an alternative that tries to liberate the African in the light of the unfolding African historical experiences. This is pertinent to this study which discusses gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean history, from pre-colonial to post-independence periods in selected Shona fictional works. The theory will be used as a yardstick to assess the selected fictional writers' ability to locate Africans at the centre of their historical experiences of the land question in Zimbabwean history.

Asante (2007: 47) further affirms that to be “Afrocentrically located, is to claim a kinship with the struggle and to pursue an ethic of justice against all forms of human oppression for both Africans on the continent and those in the diaspora.” Accordingly, Asante (2007) further argues that Africans who have been historically enslaved, exploited and colonised for cheap labour both in the slave and colonial enterprises should try and eradicate all these forms of oppression in their communities. This is crucial to the current study which discusses historical alienation and dispossession of black people’s land by white settlers. The blacks were not passive victims of the colonial onslaught but were active forces in the liberation struggle script whose main aim was to regain lost land. The post-independence land redistribution exercise which is currently ongoing in Zimbabwe, is an attempt at redressing the racial and gender imbalances brought in by colonialism on the Zimbabwean nation regarding land ownership. Consequently, Afrocentricity, a theory which calls for eradication of all forms of human oppression, becomes appropriate to the current study.

Afrocentricity also focuses on agency of the African people. It asserts that “African people must be viewed and view themselves as agents rather than spectators to historical revolution and change” (Asante, 2007: 17). People of African descent are being called to extricate themselves from the margins of their history but to claim and occupy the centre as well as influence revolutions for the benefit of humankind. To this effect Asante emphasises that, “African people must acknowledge themselves as players of the world stage not as junior citizens in the halls of theoretical or practical knowledge” (Asante, 2007: 47). Africans therefore, should spearhead the resolve to end the historical injustices that have been perpetrated against them. This is important to this study which examines fictional narratives’ portrayal of gender and land ownership. The study assesses how writers of selected Shona fiction are committed to demonstrating that Africans are subjects and not objects in the historical endeavour of rectifying historical, racial and gender imbalances in land ownership in Zimbabwe.

The centrality that Afrocentricity accords to history is decisive to this study. As Baldwin (cited in Magosvongwe, 2013: 42) observes, “To accept one’s past, one’s history is not the

same as drowning in it, it is learning how to use it.” Thus one should not be overwhelmed by their own history but this “should be used as an opportunity to re-learn and enable people to constructively deal with the present” (Magosvongwe, 2013: 42). Adopting Afrocentricity theory, with its emphasis on African history and culture, makes possible the examination of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe from pre-colonial to post-independence periods. It enables the current study to understand the selected fictional writers’ portrayal of gender and land ownership, taking into cognisance the historical processes of dispossession, liberation struggle and finally the attempt to restore the racial, gender and historical imbalances in land ownership in independent Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, Afrocentricity is all-encompassing; it studies and applies to both male and female experiences. To this Asante declares:

When the Afrocentric speaks of ‘all African experiences’ this is not a statement that is to be taken as representing a patriarchal point of view...Women are not relegated to some second tier realm as they have been in western thought, the reason for this stems from the idea that men and women derive from the same cosmological source in Africa...The linguistic fact that African languages do not distinguish between the pronouns ‘he’ and ‘she’ as is done in western languages suggests an entirely different conception of the place of women and men in the community (Asante, 2007: 48).

Accordingly, Afrocentricity does not discriminate between men and women; it does not relegate women to an inferior status as happens in feminist and western patriarchal ideology. In African culture women were not relegated to inferior positions, the queens who ruled Egypt, queen Nzinga in Angola and female warriors and chiefs among the Manyika of Zimbabwe among others, demonstrate that both men and women are equally important in any Afrocentric endeavour (Schmidt, 1990, 1992; Asante, 2007; Muwati & Mguni, 2012; Gudhlanga, 2013). The significance of women in Afrocentricity makes this theory relevant to this study which discusses gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. This is because “for most black Zimbabweans land is a sacred and essential material resource that unites them across generations and gender, giving them assurance of belonging and security” (Magosvongwe, 2013: 44). The theory therefore is relevant to this study which is committed to discussing the role played by both men and women in restoring indigenous ownership of land and its management to all black Zimbabweans despite their gender.

Karenga names seven core-cultural African characteristics comprising shared orientations about Afrocentricity namely, “The centrality of the community, respect for tradition, a high level of spirituality and ethical concern, harmony with nature, the sociality of selfhood, veneration of the ancestors and the unity of being” (cited in Mazama, 2003: 9). These facets are significant in the collective perceptions and attitudes towards the history of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe from pre-colonial period to the present day. The issue of gender and land ownership is at the core of the African people’s lives and should consequently be best critiqued from an African-centred perspective.

The preceding section has highlighted some of the tenets of Afrocentricity and demonstrated how these can be used in the criticism of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction. The succeeding section briefly ties up the significance of Afrocentricity theory in the current study.

3.2.2 The Significance of Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity is the only true ideology that seeks to place Africans where they belong; at the centre of history and not treating them as marginal to Europe. It is the ideology which calls for the liberation of the mind from any notion that Europe is the teacher and Africa is the pupil (Asante, 2007). The fact that African culture and history are at the centre of African culture and history, makes the theory very relevant to this study which discusses gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. Such an approach highlights that Africans are not victims but subjects whose interventions are aimed at removing every form of oppression that the African people have suffered including land alienation. This is very crucial to this study which critiques gender and land ownership in selected fictional works from pre-colonial to post-independence periods.

Afrocentricity’s emphasis on African history and culture is also of significance to this study. This is because literature mirrors social life and one cannot understand a work of art without understanding its connection with the realities from which it emerges (Bukharin, 1977: 186). Zhadnov (cited in Bukharin, 1977) reiterates this idea when he asserts that writers derive their material for their works of art, subject matter, images, artistic languages, from the life

experiences of their societies. Veit-Wild (1992) also concurs with the fact that the author's social background shapes his / her total creative output. She discusses Zimbabwean fiction writers in English, Shona and Ndebele. She divides them into first, second and third generations and goes on to show how the author's work as a teacher, preacher or non-believer has helped to shape his / her creative art (Veit-Wild, 1992). Hence Afrocentricity with its focus on African history and culture enables the present study to understand the theme of gender and land ownership discussed in Shona fiction in relation to the certain historical periods that the respective fictional works are set.

The Afro-centred theory of Afrocentricity is also important to this study because it does not relegate Africans to the periphery, to the margins of the European experience in which "Africans become spectators of a show that defines us from without" (Asante cited in Mazama, 2003: 4). Thus a theory which enables the Africans to define who they are as Asante declares is very relevant to this study which discusses land alienation and the need to resolve gender and racial imbalances in land ownership in Zimbabwean history.

Afrocentricity also contents that any committed Afrocentric writer or critic must always depict Africans as agents and not helpless victims that are acted upon (Tembo, 2012). In this study we therefore argue that any serious writer or critic of African literature must always be reminded that Africans are subjects and not objects of history. In the portrayal of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction, will therefore, evaluate the selected authors' commitment to presenting Africans as agents and subjects who are destined to chart their own history in redressing gender, racial and colonial imbalances in land ownership.

3.3 Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the use of African-centred approaches of Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity to the study of African literature. It has justified the use of African-centred approaches to the criticism of African literature. It has further demonstrated that African-centred approaches selected for this study are relevant to real life situations of critiquing gender and land ownership in selected Shona fictional works. The chapter has also re-enforced the fact that Zimbabweans should collectively use methods that are acquiescent to

their situation and resolve the land issue in a manner that promotes sustainable livelihoods for all Zimbabweans now and for future generations. Finally, it also demonstrated the relevance of African-centred approaches in resolving racial, gender and historical imbalances in land ownership in Zimbabwe. The following chapter discusses the research methodology.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter gives the theoretical framework that guides the study. It focuses on African-centred approaches used to critique writers' trajectories of gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. It has highlighted the use of African-centred approaches of Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity to the study of African literature. This fourth chapter discusses the research methodology that is used in this study. It discusses the qualitative research method, sampling, data collection instruments used in qualitative research like document analysis, interviews and questionnaires; and highlights the usefulness of such in carrying out the research on gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction.

4.1 Research Design

There are two main types of research designs namely qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research is hypothesis generating whilst quantitative research is hypothesis testing. The present study prefers the qualitative research design which is more suitable to the task at hand. The following section discusses qualitative research.

4.1.1 Qualitative Research

The present study uses the qualitative research method whose fundamental nature is grounded in subjective interpretation of selected Shona fiction's portrayal of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. There are various definitions of qualitative research that have been put forward by various scholars. Jupp (2006: 244) defines qualitative research as, "Research that investigates social phenomena which is not quantifiable ... it investigates aspects of social life which are not amenable to social measurement." Punch also supports this definition and avers that; "Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers" (Punch, 2003: 4). Raj (2005: 18) concurs with this definition of qualitative research, and asserts that, "Qualitative research is a method in which while studying a social problem stress is laid on quality rather than quantity aspect." Also, Fitch (1994: 32) states that "Qualitative research emphasis is on description and explanation more than on measurement and predictions as happens in quantitative research methods."

Furthermore, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 11) also state that, “By the term ‘qualitative research’ we mean any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification.” All the cited scholars concur that qualitative research focuses on verbal instead of numerical data that are collected from both primary and secondary sources. Such a research method is relevant to the current study which investigates Shona fiction’s portrayal of gender and land ownership and presents it in argumentative form and does not rely on quantitative way of presenting research evidence. Such a research design is appropriate for it enables the researcher to critically explore selected Shona fiction’s portrayal of gender and land ownership as well as the views of key informants elicited through open-ended interviews and questionnaires on the contested issue of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. The succeeding section highlights the strengths of qualitative research to this study.

4.1.1 The Strengths of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research method has a number of strengths that makes it relevant to the present research. One of the major strengths is that it presents data in descriptive form and not quantity as happens in quantitative method. Concerning the descriptive nature of qualitative method Sarantakos avers that qualitative methods of social research “... employ no quantitative standards and techniques ...” (Sarantakos, 1998: 467). Thus, while “quantitative research deals with quantity, qualitative data is data which express, usually in words, information about feelings, values and attitudes” (Sarantakos, 1998: 467). Consequently, qualitative research’s concern with meanings and interpretation of social phenomena makes it relevant to this present study which interrogates the gender and land ownership debate in Shona fiction. It is critical to this study which investigates selected Shona fictional writers’ treatment of gender and land ownership as well as responses from key informants on this contested issue of land ownership which is critical to countries that primarily depend on agriculture like Zimbabwe.

Qualitative research also emphasises on detail and to this effect Jupp (2006: 247) states that “... qualitative research, with its emphasis on depth and detail and interpretation that is often small scale or micro level.” Qualitative research is sensitive, nuanced, detailed and contextual (Trochim, 2002: 38). It “facilitates the study of issues in depth and detail ... to produce a

wealth of detailed information ... which takes the reader to the time and place of interview or observation” (Patton, 2002:14). This is relevant to the present study for it makes it possible for the critical exploration of selected Shona fiction’s treatment of the gender and land ownership debate as well as analysing the views of selected key informants who assist by giving more detail to the topic under discussion. The critical analysis of selected texts and findings from interviews and questionnaires with key informants enable the present research to gather more detail concerning the attitudes, beliefs and understanding of Shona fiction’s portrayal of the gender and land ownership debate in particular and in Zimbabwean society in general. The method thus, enables the present researcher to undertake “a descriptive research tradition for things that cannot be instrumentally measured, such as feelings, behaviour, speech, thoughts and culture” (Morrison, 1989: 24). The deliberate discussion of gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction is heavily imbedded in Shona people’s culture and hence can only be best understood through the qualitative research method.

Also of importance is the fact that qualitative research is inductive in nature, it is hypothesis generating and not hypothesis testing as happens in quantitative research. It enables the phenomena to speak for itself. McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 479) have observed the inductive nature of qualitative research and argue that “it enables the creation of a holistic and largely narrative description.” This is not achievable through quantitative research which leaves out the story. The narrative description and telling of the story is paramount to the present research which intends to understand the narrative on gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe; it enables the present research to vividly tell the story of Shona fiction’s portrayal of gender and its relation to access of resources like land from an Afrocentric and African Womanist perspectives.

Over and above its inductive nature, qualitative research is not linear as happens in quantitative research. Data collection and analysis can be done at the same time. Frankel and Devers have also observed the non-linear nature of qualitative research and affirm that:

... because inductive reasoning is emphasized, what researchers learn in the earlier stages of the research substantially affect subsequent stages of the research process...the qualitative research approach is dynamic and often non-linear to the extent that data collection and analysis can happen simultaneously...

Gwekwerere (2013: 136) also concurs with the non-linear nature of qualitative research and affirms that; “The implication of qualitative research flexibility is that, in the light of early findings, subsequent data collection and analysis procedures may be modified to enable the gathering of more specific information and exploration of new and untapped areas of interest.” This is of paramount importance to the present study which investigates Shona fiction’s portrayal of gender and land ownership. The historical detail and other varying perspectives and experiences are not forced to fit into predetermined response categories as happens in quantitative research (Patton, 2002: 14). The researcher can tap new detail that might have been overlooked at the commencement of the research study which would be very vital to the study. Such an approach is of critical importance to the present study which intends to understand the historical trajectory of gender and land ownership in selected fiction. It also makes it possible to accommodate interview and questionnaire responses, and enable the researcher to have a clearer understanding of how gender and land ownership have undergird Zimbabwean fiction.

Qualitative research method is also appropriate for an investigation of this nature because it is thorough in the collection of data. Frankel and Devers have also observed the thoroughness of qualitative research and aver that,

... in quantitative research, rigour is reflected in narrowness, conciseness and objectivity leads to rigid adherence to research designs and statistical analyses, rigour in qualitative research is associated with openness, scrupulous adherence to a philosophical perspective, thoroughness in collecting data, and consideration of all data in the development of theory (Frankel & Devers, 2000: 251).

Such a thorough method of data collection which is not rigid and allows the phenomena to enlighten the researcher is appropriate in this research which intends to understand selected Shona fiction’s portrayal of gender and land ownership. The historical nuances in this debate are also made possible by the qualitative research design which is open to get more information instead of being guided by rigid research methods that result in failure to grasp the situation at hand.

Even though the qualitative method has a number of advantages in investigating the present study, the researcher is aware of the shortcomings of the method. The succeeding section briefly discusses the weakness of qualitative research methodology in research.

4.1.2 The Shortcomings of Qualitative Research

The researcher is however aware of the weaknesses of the qualitative methodology. One of the major weaknesses of the method is its failure to be representative. While quantitative method allows for a broader study which include a wider coverage “involving a greater number of subjects and limited variables to enhance objectivity, accuracy and generalizability of results, qualitative research covers a limited area” (Patton, 2002:46). This study for example, critiques six selected Shona fictional works out of a plethora of Shona fictional works and this is not representative of the genre of Shona fiction. It also solicits information through interviews and questionnaires from a few selected key informants on the subject matter. However, this challenge is lessened by the fact that the selected fictional works traverse the historical epochs that the country has gone through, dating from pre-colonial to post-independence periods. The selected fictional works’ treatment of gender and land ownership is discussed in the context of these different historical periods that the country has evolved through. In addition, the selected key informants are believed to have the relevant information on Shona fiction’s portrayal of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe for they deal with fictional works at various levels ranging from being authors, critics, academics, publishers and readers.

Also, the representativeness of qualitative research is often assumed for the method heavily relies on accessible information. Robin has observed the susceptibility of the qualitative research method and avers that, “... qualitative research instruments are handicapped by the fact that ‘representativeness’ is often assumed when it is suspect and there are tendencies for over-reliance on accessible informants, accessible events and plausible explanations” (Robin, 1993: 402). The present research relies on very few selected texts of Shona fiction and information from very few selected key informants. This problem is abridged by the fact that the selected texts have been hailed by most critics for handling gender land issues in Zimbabwean history. Also, the key informants selected have vast knowledge of the different subject matters discussed in Shona fiction in a Zimbabwean context.

The other critical challenge of the method is the trustworthiness of the data gathered. Robin affirms that “... with qualitative research the trustworthiness of the data gathered is always a worry... the data gathered from questionnaires and interviews may either be withheld or fabricated” (Robin, 1993: 383). The present research averts this challenge by comparing the information gathered from open-ended interviews and questionnaires with the presentation of gender and land ownership in selected Shona fictional works.

Bias is also another weakness of qualitative research because the research method is subjective in nature. In this study the problem of bias is averted through comparison of sources of information, similar findings attest to a greater possibility of it being true. Robin has also noted this and states that, “If two sources give the same messages then to some extent they cross-validate each other, and if there is a discrepancy, its investigation may help in explaining the phenomenon of interest” (Robins, 1993: 383). The present research therefore has selected fictional works that traverse the historical periods that the country has evolved through in order to critique Shona fiction’s treatment of gender and land ownership. Furthermore, it also compares this with fiction published in English. As for key informants, their contribution is also compared in order to get information that is more reliable and close to the truth in as far as gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe is concerned. In spite of these challenges the qualitative research method is still pertinent to this study. The succeeding section highlights the importance of using qualitative research in this study.

4.1.3 Justification of Qualitative Research

Despite the shortcomings of the method highlighted in the preceding section the present research still finds the method relevant to undertake the task at hand of critiquing the portrayal of gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. This is because while quantitative methods provide very interesting data about how much or how many questions, they miss some of the story which is clearly explained by the use of the qualitative method. Qualitative method is chosen over quantitative method despite its shortcomings because it enables the present researcher to accomplish the task at hand. Silverman (2010) has also noted the importance of qualitative research in carrying out research that deals with people’s life histories and everyday issues that they face. He states that, “Methods should be our servants not our rulers. If you are concerned with exploring people’s life histories or

everyday behaviours, then qualitative method may be favoured” (Silverman, 2010: 8). The present study which critiques Shona fiction’s portrayal of gender and land ownership, and how key informants understand Shona fiction’s portrayal of the gender and land ownership debate is made possible through the use of qualitative research.

However, Silverman is quick to note that qualitative research is not superior to quantitative research but the method that one uses is determined by the nature and type of the research agenda. To support this he avers that:

Never assume that qualitative methods are intrinsically superior. Indeed a quantitative approach may be sometimes more appropriate to the research problem in which you are interested. So in choosing a method, everything depends upon what you are trying to find out. No method of research, quantitative or qualitative is intrinsically better than any other (Silverman, 2010: 10).

This, therefore, makes the qualitative research method which focuses on verbal descriptions, understanding life histories and having a holistic approach to phenomena better suited to critique the portrayal of gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. It enables the present researcher to understand the key historical factors that influence authors of selected Shona fiction’s portrayal of the contested terrain of gender and land in their works. It also enables the present researcher to be able to critique the findings from interviews and questionnaires on Shona fiction’s portrayal of the gender and land ownership debate. It also provides results that are usually rich and detailed and offers ideas and concepts that inform the research. Furthermore, it enables the researcher to critically analyse selected works of Shona fiction’s treatment of the contested terrain of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. Also, the qualitative method is in line with Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity theories which emphasise that in order to understand African people, it is imperative to weave in the historical aspects and cultural identities that shape them. After understanding the importance of the qualitative method it is necessary to discuss the research participants that are best suited in providing the necessary information that is relevant to this study.

4.2 Research Participants

The research population identified for the study are the authors of Shona fiction. A maximum of four authors of the selected fictional works who are still alive were interviewed. This is because they have a better understanding and knowledge of gender and land ownership in

selected fiction. Also, critics cum academics of African literature published in both indigenous languages and English are part of the research population. Questionnaires were distributed to twenty critics cum academics of African literature. Five academics from each of the following institutions formed part of the respondents; the University of Zimbabwe, Great Zimbabwe University, Midlands State University and Morgan Zintec Teachers' College. These academics cum critics were selected because they have critiqued African literature and have a better appreciation of the contents of fictional works as well as understanding the various forces that are at play in shaping the authors' social vision of land ownership which has remained a contested terrain in Zimbabwean history. Readers of Shona fiction are also part of the research population. This is because these have read Shona novels and are well versed with the contents of Shona fiction. Questionnaires were distributed to both under graduate and post graduate students in the Department of African Languages and Literature of the University of Zimbabwe, Great Zimbabwe University, Midlands State University and Morgan Zintec Teachers' College who are studying Shona literature. Questionnaires were distributed to forty students who comprise readers of Shona Literature, ten from each institution of higher learning included in the sample. These are well versed with the contents of Shona fiction.

Additionally, publishers of these fictional works are part of the research population, they understand the issues that are discussed in the works of art that they publish and were in a better position to discuss the contents of the published fiction in as far as gender and land ownership is concerned. Questionnaires were also sent to editors of four publishing houses that have published these fictional works. These include Mambo Press, Weaver Press, Zimbabwe Publishing House and Booklove Publishers. In total questionnaires were distributed to sixty four respondents while four were interviewed. The sample size consisted of sixty eight respondents. Views of these different groups of people that make the research population are vital in critiquing the authors' social vision on gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. They greatly assist in bringing to the fore Shona fiction's portrayal of gender and land ownership.

Also studied are Shona fictional works that discuss land issues. The study endeavours to discuss how selected Shona fictional works present gender and land ownership dynamics.

This is because literature mirrors the environment from which it emerges. It was also impossible to discuss all Shona fictional works that deal with gender and land issues. Hence only a sample of selected fictional works were analysed. It was an insurmountable task to critique all Shona literary works' presentation of gender and land ownership, hence opting for a manageable sample for analysis. The selected fictional works which form the bulk of the sources of data are; Mutswairo's *Feso* (1956), Chakaipa's *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* (1967), Tsodzo's *Pafunge* (1972) Choto's *Vavariro* (1990), Moyo's *Kuridza Ngoma neDemo* (1985) and Davie Mutasa's *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005).

It was not possible to solicit data from every member of the above-mentioned groups of people for the research study; neither was it possible to read all fiction that has been published on gender and land ownership in Shona hence the need for sampling. The following section discusses the sampling strategies used in this study.

4.3 Sampling Strategies

The preceding section has highlighted the research population. It was very difficult to include all members of the population under study. Instead a sample of the population was selected for observation and analysis. In simple terms, a sample can be defined as a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. By observing a sample's characteristics one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which the sample is drawn. A sample is therefore a subset of a population that is used to represent the entire population selected for a study. In light of this, the study takes a sample of the population which is manageable for observation and analysis. Miles and Huberman (cited in Wasosa, 2014: 91) concur on the use of samples in order to carry out a research study, they affirm that, "All research including qualitative research, involves sampling. This is because no study whether quantitative or qualitative or both; can include everything: you cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything." This study therefore sampled a fraction of the research population stated in the preceding section. As alluded to earlier on the sample comprised of authors of selected fictional works, consumers of literature especially academics, critics and readers of African literature, and publishers. These respondents are most likely to possess information on literature's portrayal of gender and land ownership in

Zimbabwe and would therefore make a very good source of the requisite data needed for the study.

There are various types of sampling which fall under the two broad categories of probability and non-probability sampling methods. Under probability sampling each member of the research population has an equal chance of being selected for the study whilst under non-probability sampling each member's chance of being selected to participate in the study is not known. Qualitative research mainly uses non-probability sampling strategies whilst quantitative research employs probability sampling strategies. Non-probability sampling strategies include; snowball, convenience and purposive among others. On the other hand probability sampling strategies comprise of simple random, stratified, cluster and systematic among others.

Of the non-probability sampling methods, the study engaged purposive sampling of key informants who are believed to have some in-depth knowledge of Shona fiction's portrayal of gender and land ownership issues in Zimbabwe. These key informants were purposively identified and selected. They were believed to be "individuals who possess special knowledge, status or communication skills and who are willing to share that knowledge with the researcher" (Le Compte & Goertz cited in Fetterman, 1984: 34). Muranda has also observed the role of key informants and avers that, "The key informant technique involves conducting exploratory research by seeking out and talking to respondents with known expertise in the research area" (Muranda, 2004: 55). The key informant technique is therefore important in this study which interrogates the gender and land ownership question in Zimbabwean literature.

To further support the use of purposive sampling, Palys (2008: 3) asserts that, "Purposive sampling is synonymous with qualitative research. Think of the person or place or situation that has the largest potential for advancing your understanding and look there." The research endeavoured to get valid information that guided it from purposively sampled key informants, that is, authors, academics, readers, publishers and critics of African literature. Cresswell has also observed the importance of key informants in qualitative research and

argues that, “In the entire qualitative research process, the researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning that participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research or writers express in the literature” (Cresswell, 2009: 164). The responses from the sampled informants as well as the data generated from selected Shona fiction was used to draw conclusions on the gender and land ownership in Shona fiction in general.

The sample size of key informants who have in-depth knowledge of the depiction of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean literature was determined by the aspect of data saturation or redundancy. The sample size is relatively small because the number of key informants in qualitative research is concerned with narrative detail as opposed to quantity of respondents. Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009) have also observed that the small sample size in qualitative research is determined by data saturation and affirm that “Qualitative research studies typically have much smaller samples than quantitative studies...The size of a qualitative sample is considered sufficient when the criterion of redundancy is met. The redundancy criterion is met when the inclusion or recruitment of an additional respondent does not significantly add new information and understanding.” This explains why the study whose main source of data is selected fictional works relied on open-ended interviews and questionnaires with very few selected key informants namely forty students from the four sampled institutions of higher learning (five from each institution); twenty academics cum critics from the four sampled institutions (five from each institution), four authors and four publishers. After highlighting the sampling strategy used in this study it is prudent to discuss the methods of gathering data used in this study.

4.4 Research Instruments or (Methods of Gathering Data)

This section discusses the main methods of gathering data which can be broadly classified as primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources of information provide the bulk of the research information for any given research endeavour. The primary source often refers to the data that is collected by the researcher through various data collection methods. Haralambos and Holborn concur with this and affirm that, “Primary sources of information consist of data collected by researchers themselves during the course of their work. This includes data collected by researchers using questionnaires, conducting interviews or carrying

out participant observation...” (Haralambos & Holborn, 1990: 720). Gray (2009) concurs with these primary sources of data and adds document analysis as another primary source of data in qualitative research. Selected Shona fiction, open-ended interviews and open-ended questionnaires are the primary sources of data which were used in combination for purposes of enriching this study. Jupp (2006: 249) affirms that “the methods used in qualitative research often in combination, are those which are open-ended (to explore participants’ interpretations) and which allow the collection of detailed information in a relatively close setting.” Therefore, open-ended interviews, open-ended questionnaires and document analysis of selected Shona fictional works are the primary sources of data for this study.

Although selected Shona fictional works and open-ended interviews and questionnaires are the primary sources of information, the study also relied on secondary sources of data. Haralambos and Hoborn (1990: 720) argue that “... secondary sources include official statistics, mass media products, diaries, letters, government reports, other sociologists’ work and historical and contemporary record.” They further state that “secondary sources consist of data which already exist” (Haralambos & Holborn, 1990: 720). In this study the secondary sources are of paramount importance for they raised the study from a mere recount of fictional narratives to a higher level of scholarly discourse. The succeeding sections discuss the various methods of data collection used in this study.

4.4.1 Interviews

Most scholars concur that individual interviews are the most widely used method of data collection in qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Cohen & Manion, 1989; Bryman, 2001; Dawson, 2002; Ritchie, 2003; Snape & Spencer, 2003; Elliot, 2005; Neuman, 2007; Szczerbinski & Wellington, 2007; Flick, 2009; Gray, 2009; Kelly, 2011; MacDonald & Headlam, 2011). Even though the selected Shona fictional works are the main sources of data, the study also used in-depth open-ended interviews and open-ended questionnaires to solicit data that guided it. The study used in-depth open-ended interviews and open-ended questionnaires minimally because the thrust of the research is to explore how gender and land ownership are depicted in selected Shona fiction.

There are various definitions of the interview method that have been put forward by different scholars. Burgess (1984: 102) defines an interview as a “conversation with a purpose.” Jupp (2006: 157) also defines it as “a method of data collection, information or opinion gathering that specifically involves a series of questions.” Also David and Sutton (2004: 87) affirm that “interviewing involves asking people questions, but is equally about listening carefully to the answers given.” All the cited scholars have highlighted the aspect of dialoguing with sources of data in order to extract information that is appropriate for the study. The interview method is quite relevant to this study for it enabled the researcher to converse with people who might assist in shedding more light in as far as gender and land ownership in Shona fiction is concerned. The information from the key informants enabled the study to balance the information that is found in fictional narratives and what is said by people in as far as the depiction of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction is concerned. There are different types of interviews and the succeeding section briefly discusses these.

4.4.1.1 Types of Interviews

As stated in the previous section there are different types of interviews. What researchers need to know is to select the type of interview that executes the task at hand by achieving the study’s specific aims and objectives. Dawson (2002) gives the following types of interviews; unstructured, structured and semi-structured interviews. She states that unstructured interviews attempt to get a holistic understanding of the interviewee’s point of view or situation. The interviewer normally goes into the interview with the intention of discussing very few topics which would be covered in very great detail but has no pre-conceived plan on how they will deal with the topic, hence the name unstructured. Some of the issues will come out once the interview has commenced. Such type of interview while giving a lot of narrative detail can produce a great deal of data which can be difficult to analyse (Dawson, 2002).

Semi-structured interview on the other hand has an interview schedule which consists of a list of questions or topics to be discussed (Dawson, 2002). In this type of interview the researcher wants to know specific information which can be compared with information gathered from other respondents. However, the researcher wants the interview to remain flexible so that other important information can still arise (Dawson, 2002). This is the type of interview which is ideal for this study, which has open-ended questions and gives room for flexibility.

This enables the researcher to gather more information on Shona fiction's depiction of gender and land ownership from the sampled respondents who have more knowledge on Shona fiction's presentation of gender and ownership of resources like land.

The third type of interview which Dawson (2002) discusses is the structured interview. She argues that this type of interview is highly structured hence the name. It has a series of questions in which the interviewer asks the respondent and ticks boxes for the responses given (Dawson, 2002). Most of the answers are in closed form and do not give room for flexibility during the interview. Structured interviews are mostly used in quantitative research while unstructured and semi-structured ones are used in qualitative research.

Most of these interviews are face-to-face but in some instances when the respondent is far away they can also be conducted over the phone or through the internet. Apart from individual interviews, there are also group interviews which have come to be termed Focus Group Discussions. In group interviews the researcher is more of a moderator in the discussion (Dawson, 2002). This study however did not use group interviews but face-to-face individual semi-structured and unstructured interviews. These types of interviews were preferred for they were flexible; did not have pre-coded answers and enabled the researcher to get the detailed information of gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction from the respondents. Interviews have advantages and disadvantages as data collection instruments. The succeeding section briefly discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the interview method.

4.4.1.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Interview Method

This section briefly discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the interview method as a data collection instrument. One of the advantages of the method is that it enables the researcher to get first-hand information right away. There is no need to wait as in the case with questionnaires. The feedback is immediate and guarantees a 100 percent response rate. In-depth open-ended interviews with key informants enabled the researcher to solicit information used to assess the authenticity of what is presented in selected fictional works. In-depth open-ended interview questions "provide no restrictions on the content or manner of

the reply other than on the subject matter” (Robin, 1993: 233). Such interviewing technique enabled the researcher to gather more data from the informants. What has to be noted is the fact that in-depth open-ended interviews were not the main sources of data, but in-depth critical analysis of selected fictional works. The interviews only came in to assess if the authors’ presentation of gender and land ownership is also supported by what happens in real life, to demonstrate if there is historical truth in the selected authors’ portrayal of gender and land in Zimbabwe in their works.

Interviews also permitted the researcher to follow up leads and consequently obtain data with greater precision. They enabled the researcher to probe further if inadequate answers are given. Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007: 81) have observed the ability of interviews to probe further and state that, “Interviews allow the researcher to probe an interviewee’s thoughts, values prejudices, perceptions, views and perspectives.” The interviewer managed to ask follow-up questions so as to clarify responses. Apart from making follow-up questions the interview enabled the researcher to also clarify certain information that might not be clear to the respondent. Through interviews the researcher was also able to allay certain fears that the respondents had, a thing that was impossible with other data collection instruments like questionnaires. Thus, through the interview method the researcher was able to “reach the parts which other methods could not reach” (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007: 81). Such a method enabled the present researcher to get more information on Shona fiction’s portrayal of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe.

Also, interviews have the advantage of flexibility which enables one to make necessary adjustments and control the order in which the respondent receives the questions which is not possible with questionnaires. The interviews also enabled the researcher to control the context of the interview including possible biasing presence of other people, an aspect which is not achievable with other data collection instruments like questionnaires.

Despite having a number of advantages, the interview method also has some disadvantages as a data collection instrument. Dawson (2002) cites a number of disadvantages of the method. One of them is that the interviewer’s expectations or personal characteristics such as sex or

race can influence responses. Closely related to this is that established rapport of the respondent can give invalid, socially undesirable answers to suit the interviewer's expectations or desires. Robin (1993: 19) has observed this and avers that "interview responses are notorious for discrepancies between what people say that they have done, or will do, and what they actually did or will do."

Interviews are also very expensive and time consuming especially if the informants are distant apart (Denscombe, 2010). The researcher would need money for accommodation and travel which is not the case with questionnaires and document analysis. Denscombe (2010) also further notes that interviews are time-consuming as far as data analysis is concerned. This is because they are end-loaded rather than pre-coded as is the case with questionnaires. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews produce non-standard answers. This would mean arranging the data, coding it and finally analysing it.

Face-to-face interviews lack anonymity and some respondents do not feel comfortable to divulge sensitive information even after being assured that their responses will be treated in strict confidence. Finally interviewing without the necessary skills might lead to invasion of privacy which normally upsets informants and compromises the whole interview and the data gathered.

Despite the fact that interviews have some disadvantages they are still crucial as data collection instruments and would be used in this study. In-depth open-ended interviews with key informants are used in order to avoid over reliance on desk research of analysing fictional works only. This is very important for it releases the researcher from the confines of arm chair research. Magosvongwe (2013) has also noted the importance of using interviews to authenticate data presented in fictional narratives. She avers that:

... direct touch with the physical environment and the social re-organisation of the land structures and systems remain invaluable for deeper insights allowing independent judgement of the land question at hand within its socio-historical, cultural and economic milieu. This somewhat releases the researcher from the entrapping effects of desk research that objectifies individuals and communities that creative writers depict. It is refreshing to interact with real people and the

environment outside the frozen parameters of fictional narratives (Magosvongwe, 2013: 25).

Interviewing key informants provides insights on gender and land ownership that desk research alone cannot sufficiently provide. The interview method alone has a number of shortcomings as highlighted earlier on; thus there is need to complement this method of data collection with other methods. This is also supported by Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 2) who state that “Qualitative research deploys a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand.” Therefore, the need to mix the desk research of analysing fictional narratives and other data collection instruments like open-ended questionnaires and open-ended interviews to complement each other can never be over emphasised. The succeeding section discusses the questionnaire method.

4.2.2 Questionnaires

Raj (2005: 167) defines a questionnaire as “a method in social research in which information is obtained with the help of questionnaire, which is prepared exclusively for the purpose. In other words, with the help of set questions all the data required is collected.” Jupp concurs with this definition and avers that a questionnaire is “a set of carefully designed questions given in exactly the same form to a group of people in order to collect data about some topics in which the researcher is interested” (Jupp, 2006: 252). A questionnaire therefore, is a document containing a set of questions given to informants to respond to. It is normally distributed through the post or by hand to be filled by the respondent in their own spare time. It is designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis. The questions should be clear, short and not double barrelled. There are no right or wrong answers when filling a questionnaire. The questionnaire method is useful in collecting data from key informants who include; authors of selected fictional works, critics of African literature, academics, and members of civic organisations and research institutes that deal with land issues, and are not quite comfortable with face-to-face interviews. There are different types of questionnaires and the succeeding section discusses these different types.

4.4.2.1 Types of Questionnaires

Sidhu (1984) argues that questionnaires can be classified into different types. Firstly, he gives the structured and unstructured questionnaires. He further avers that structured questionnaires

consist of definite, concrete and direct questions whilst unstructured ones may consist of partially completed questions or statements. Secondly, he gives the closed form and open form questionnaires. Dawson (2002) has also observed this second classification and terms them closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires. She argues that closed-ended questionnaires calls for a short check response in the form of yes or no answers, or picking the answer from a list of provided short responses. In such questionnaires there is no liberty in the choice of responses. On the other hand Dawson (2002) states that the open-ended questionnaire gives room for the respondent to fill in his or her own words since there are no guided responses. The unstructured (Sidhu, 1984) or the open-ended questionnaire (Dawson, 2002) is relevant to this study which elicits respondents' views and attitudes on the gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. The structured or closed questionnaire is most ideal in quantitative research. The questionnaire method just like the interview method also has some advantages and disadvantages when used as a method of data collection in qualitative research. The following section discusses some of the advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire method.

4.4.2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Questionnaire Method

This section briefly discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire method as a data collection instrument. Borg, Gall and Gall (1996) highlight a number of advantages of the questionnaire method. Firstly they argue that one of the advantages of the method is its ability to place less pressure for immediate response on the subject. It gives the respondent a greater feeling of anonymity and therefore encourages open responses to sensitive questions. Also, the questionnaire is less expensive, whether they are mailed or distributed, questionnaires remain a more affordable method of data collection as compared to observation and interviews (Borg, et.al. 1996). Borg, et.al. (1996) also state that questionnaires save time, meaning that more data are collected over a short period of time. Lastly, questionnaires eliminate potential interviewer biases. Although these biases can be minimised in interviews they are completely eliminated in a written questionnaire (Borg, et. al. 1996). The advantages of the questionnaire over the interview method enabled the researcher to get information on gender and land ownership, since the land issue is a highly contested matter in Zimbabwe today, some respondents were not comfortable to air their views in face to face interviews but would gladly do so when responding to an anonymous written questionnaire.

Despite the fact that the method has a number of advantages, as alluded to earlier on, it also has some disadvantages. Borg, et. al. (1996) also summarise some of the disadvantages of the method. They state that one of the major disadvantages of the method is that a certain number of potential respondents, particularly the illiterate and the visually impaired are left out. Also, they aver that the method does not allow the interviewer to correct misunderstandings or to answer questions that respondents might have (Borg, et. al. 1996). Furthermore, the requirement to use a short questionnaire leaves out necessary questions and on the other hand long questionnaires result in decreased response rate. With questionnaires there is also the inability to control the context of question answering and specifically the presence of other people. Coupled with this is the lack of control over question order. It is often important for respondents to answer one question before seeing the other, but usually respondents go through the whole questionnaire before answering the first question. Finally, questionnaires have a low response rate as compared to interviews that give immediate feedback. Despite these weaknesses, the questionnaire is still an important method of data collection and is used to complement other methods of data collection like interviews and document analysis used in this study. The following section discusses the document analysis method.

4.4.3 Desk Research and / Document Analysis

The preceding sections have discussed the interview and questionnaire methods of data collection which involve one going into the field to collect the data relevant to the study. This section discusses data derived from analysis of documents namely the selected fictional works and the secondary sources used in this study.

4.4.3.1 Document Analysis of Selected Shona Fictional Works

Cresswell (2009: 162) argues that “... Although the processes of qualitative and quantitative research are similar, the qualitative procedures rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse strategies of inquiry.” The present study therefore relies heavily on textual analysis of selected Shona fiction’s presentation of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. Dependence on fictional works was used as a way of ameliorating the various challenges that are usually associated with open-ended interview and questionnaire methods. The selected fictional works which form the bulk of the sources of data are; Mutswairo’s *Feso* (1956), Chakaipa’s *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* (1967),

Tsodzo's *Pafunge* (1972), Choto's *Vavariro* (1990), Moyo's *Kuridza Ngoma neDemo* (1985) and Davie Mutasa's *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005).

The selected fictional works traverse the all the phases of Zimbabwean history from pre-colonial right up to post-independence periods. Of importance, is the fact that among the selected fiction is the first novel to be published in the Shona language, *Feso* (1956) by Solomon Mutswairo. Also, the setting of these fictional works covers the land dispossession, colonialism, liberation struggle and post-independence periods. The post-independence period covers the time in which land ownership and redistribution was governed by the dictates of the Bretton Woods institutions right up to the period in which the Government of Zimbabwe had suspended the dictates of the Bretton Woods institutions, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme period being represented by *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005). The setting of these selected fictional works makes it possible for the present study to trace the various nuances that undergird the trajectory of the gender and land ownership question in Zimbabwe.

In-depth critical analysis of these selected fictional works makes it possible for the present study to bring to the fore Shona fiction's treatment of the contested terrain of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean history. This is also made possible by the Afro-centred theories of Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity which focus on weaving in a people's history and culture in any analysis of works of art. Through critical analysis of the selected texts the study intends to lay bare issues of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean fiction, an area which has been neglected by earlier critics of Zimbabwean literature. Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009: 170) have also observed the importance of critical textual analysis and affirm that:

The sign of a good qualitative research study is that the analysis provides a new and compelling interpretation of a text. By new, we mean novel, unique, and engaging. By compelling we mean logical and supported by rich descriptive examples that persuade the reader to adopt the researcher's interpretation of the text.

The present study therefore, intends to persuade readers to this new critical exegesis of Shona fiction which lays bare the relationship between both genders to land.

Also, of importance is the fact that as a qualitative method, textual analysis aims to study the meanings of words and expressions in selected Shona fiction in their endeavour to exhibit the gender and land ownership debate in Zimbabwean literature. Textual analysis of selected texts is a suitable method to analyse selected Shona literature's portrayal of topical issues like gender and land ownership. It also enables the research to place value judgement on the way in which Shona fictional writers depict gender and land ownership in their works.

The selected works of Shona fiction are the main sources of information on gender and land ownership. These fictional works were purposively selected for the study for they deal with land issues even though earlier critical works did not give a comprehensive analysis of gender and land ownership in Shona fiction. The present study used the selected fictional narratives as raw sources of data that are critiqued within the Africana Womanist and Afrocentric paradigms. In order to avoid a complete desktop research the present study also solicited data from key informants who have vast experience and knowledge of Shona fiction's depiction of gender and land ownership through open-ended interviews and questionnaires. This also enables the study to assess the selected fictional writers' presentation of the gender and land debate in Zimbabwean history. Apart from analysing selected Shona fictional works the study also used some secondary sources of data. The succeeding section therefore, discusses the secondary sources of data which are also analysed for purposes soliciting information relevant to the study.

4.4.3.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary sources for this study consist of other fictional works published in English that discuss gender and land. They also include critical works that are related to the present inquiry. These include journal articles, books, theses and even newspapers. These secondary sources are important to the study because they raise very insightful ideas that authenticate arguments raised in this study. Also, the examination of gender and land ownership is based on the analysis of publications from research institutes such as the African Institute of Agrarian Studies that focus their work on land, gender and indigenous rights to rural development. Furthermore, land ownership is a contested terrain which permeates all disciplines; the study therefore, uses research publications from political science, history, sociology and other social sciences in its analysis of the fictional narratives' presentation of

gender and land ownership. The gender and land ownership question is a real issue in Zimbabwean history and hence the study cannot rely on fictional works alone as sources of data on gender and land ownership. The succeeding section briefly discusses the importance of using complementary sources of data to a research of this nature.

4.5 Justification for Complementary Sources of Data Collection

Since the gender and land ownership debate is still current and very close to the lives of the key informants, namely; writers, critics, academics, publishers and readers; it is necessary not to rely on selected fictional works alone as sources of data. Getting information through interviews and questionnaires from key informants who are both witnesses, participants and conversant with Shona fiction's depiction of gender and land ownership contextualises the gender and land ownership debate within its socio-historical matrix. Magosvongwe (2013) has also observed the need for complementary sources of information when analysing works of fiction. She attests that:

The cumulative effect of the complimentary sources of information boosts psychological and intellectual confidence of the researcher to explore the unfolding, controversial and hotly contested land-identity subject where everyone claims authority. The idea for compressing the sources of data as a window into appreciating trajectories of land identity in the texts at hand also demonstrates that the writers' depictions are not about disembodied beings, but stand to reflect Zimbabwean lived experiences (Magosvongwe, 2013: 26).

Apart from boosting the confidence of the researcher, the complementary sources of data therefore situate the selected Shona fictional narratives in the broader context of the gender and land ownership debate unfolding in Zimbabwean history. They also further demonstrate that literature can never be dissociated from the environment from which it emerges, since writers of fiction draw their stories from the societies in which they live.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

The need to follow some ethical consideration in social science research that deals with human beings can never be over emphasised. The Economic Social Science Research Council (ESSRC) outlines six key principles of social research (ESSRC cited in MacDonald & Headlam, 2011). They state that research should be designed and undertaken to ensure integrity. Also, they argue that research subjects should be fully informed of the purpose,

methods and intended possible uses of the research and what their participation in the research entails, the risks they might encounter if any. Furthermore, the ESSRC calls for confidentiality of information supplied by the research subjects and emphasise that anonymity of respondents must be respected. They further state that research participants must voluntarily participate in any given research without any form of coercion. Also, harm to participants must be avoided at all costs and the research should be clear without any conflict of interest (ESSRC cited in MacDonald & Headlam, 2011).

The present study heavily borrows from the six principles of ethical social research propounded by the ESSRC. The researcher explained clearly the purpose of the research to the participants, explained the methods of data collection, possible outcomes and clearly explained to the respondents that the results of the research would be presented in a thesis, or could be published in a journal or book. The research participants were also made aware that their participation in the research was voluntary and no form of coercion was used. Those who decided to take part in the research were given an information sheet to keep and were asked to sign a written consent form. It was also made clear that the participants were free to withdraw from the research for no particular reason without suffering any harm or prejudice. However, the researcher made it clear that it was not possible with those who would have filled in anonymous questionnaires; it would be difficult for them to withdraw from the study once they had filled and submitted the questionnaire. They could only withdraw before submitting the questionnaire, once it was filled and submitted it was difficult for such informants to withdraw from the study. This is because the questionnaire method is anonymous, the researcher would not be in a position to know the particular informant who would have filled in a specific questionnaire hence making it very difficult to withdraw from the study after filling and submitting a questionnaire. It was also made clear that it would not be possible to withdraw a submitted questionnaire. The participants were also informed that their responses would be kept with the strictest confidence and be used for purposes of the study. The researcher also clearly explained to the prospective respondents that recorded responses from interviews would be downloaded on to a computer which has a password and could not be accessed by anyone else, the responses would however be used in writing the research and the participants' confidentiality and anonymity would be respected. As a way of summarising the ethical considerations, the researcher made it very clear on how the data would be collected, analysed and disseminated. The researcher also vividly explained that

there would be no attempts to manipulate the results during data collection and even after completion. Key issues and problems met during the research would be communicated to the university using the correct procedures.

4.7 Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the methods of obtaining data for the study. It has demonstrated that the research is qualitative in nature. It has examined the strengths and weaknesses of the qualitative research methodology. It has further demonstrated the appropriateness of using qualitative research to this study which examines gender and land ownership in selected Shona fictional works. The chapter has also highlighted that selected Shona fictional works as well as responses from key informants are the primary sources of data. It has discussed the advantages and disadvantages of various data collection instruments. It further elucidated that even though open-ended interviews and open-ended questionnaires are used as sources of primary data they are used minimally since the major thrust of the study is to explore Shona fictional works' treatment of gender and land ownership. Also, the chapter has discussed the importance of secondary sources of data used in the analysis of the selected fictional works. The chapter has also discussed the ethical considerations used in this research. Finally; it also demonstrated the importance of using complementary sources of data to assess Shona fictional works' treatment of gender and land ownership. The following chapter presents and analyses data from selected Shona fictional works as well as data gathered through open-ended interviews and questionnaires. On the basis of the thematic concerns on gender and land ownership, chapter five is divided into different sections which are derived from the thematic frames identified in the selected works of fiction that are being critiqued in this study.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.0 Selected Fictional Works, Interviewees and Respondents' Perspectives

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has discussed the research methodology and it has highlighted that research benefits substantially from getting information through interviews and questionnaires from key informants who are both witnesses, participants and conversant with Shona fiction's depiction of gender and land ownership. Data from fieldwork contextualise the gender and land ownership debate within its socio-historical matrix. This chapter comprises of the main discussion of the study by primarily engaging on the selected fictional works' portrayal of gender and land ownership. It critiques how the respective selected fictional writers use their literary prowess to re-build and re-cast gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean history. Furthermore, information gathered from interviews and questionnaires is used to support the discussion and analysis of the narratives presented by different fictional writers. This is imperative for the reason that literature is a social science and it is inseparable from the environment from which it emerges. It gets its images and ideas from the environment from which it emanates. Consequently the ideas created by literary works infuse back into the community through the reading of literary works by different people. Data gathered from the respective interviews and questionnaires therefore become pertinent in elucidating the gender and land ownership trajectory presented by different fictional writers.

The selected fictional works discussed in this chapter jointly look into the historical correlation of the gender and land ownership subject matter from an African perspective. They tackle the injustices regarding land, especially the selective exclusion of blacks, both male and female from accessing land and other vital resources in some selected fictional works from colonial right up to post-independence periods in Zimbabwe. The selected fictional works further bring to the fore the different historical processes that resulted in land dispossession and the ways in which the independent Zimbabwean government has tried to redress such imbalances. The different fictional writers, despite their works being set in different historical epochs present through their narratives, the different strategies taken by the marginalised and landless blacks in trying to regain their heritage, which is the land. The selected fictional writers explore the quest for land within its socio-historical context. The

critical gaze that the narratives take is pertinent in correcting the historical and gender injustices that black Zimbabweans encountered. This is the background against which the gender and land ownership debate presented in the fictional narratives emerge. It is against this socio-historical setting that the authors' portrayal of gender and land ownership is analysed. Before critiquing the selected fictional works in detail, it is important to give a synopsis of the selected fictional works.

5.2 Data Generated from Selected Fictional Works

All the selected fictional works are set in Zimbabwe but they traverse the different historical epochs which Zimbabwe as a nation has evolved through. In their different historical epochs the fictional works collectively address the issue of dispossession of land among blacks, both male and female by the white colonial masters. All these selected works highlight the challenges that the indigenous men and women had to go through as a result of the expropriation of their land by colonial settlers. They vividly give a picture of the black people, both men and women who suffer the consequences of dispossession of land and other resources. The suffering that the black people have endured compels them to fight the colonial masters so that they regain back their lost land. This explains why some of these selected works especially those set after independence go a step further to discuss how the black men and women have taken steps to redress the racial, colonial and gender injustices in land ownership. The dispossessed indigenous people are not passive recipients of the socio-economic and political injustices perpetrated against them but are determined on fighting to regain their lost land. They are in the forefront of the struggle for land reclamation as expounded by Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity theoretical paradigms.

5.2.1 A Synopsis of *Feso* (1956)

Feso by Solomon Mangwiro Mutsware was the first novel to be published in Shona language. The novel is an allegorical critique of the colonialist establishment (Mandova & Wasosa, 2012). The novel is set in the pre-colonial period and centres on chief Nyan'ombe who leads the VaHota people and chief Pfumojena of the VaNyai people. Chief Nyan'ombe lives peacefully with his people while Pfumojena is a despot who oppresses his people. During this time the Shona people, represented by both chiefdoms (the VaNyai and VaHota), were a self-sufficient agrarian society which supplemented crop husbandry with animal

husbandry. The novel presents the pre-colonial society as a world of plenty in which wildlife, forestry and other resources were easily available for use by the indigenous people (pp. 3-4). The community could easily gather firewood from the forests, timber for building houses, wildlife to supplement domestic meat and even had sufficient grazing areas for cattle (p. 3). The Shona people also had fertile land and produced sufficient food which ensured food security for several years (p. 3). The VaHota people reside in Mazowe area, which covers Agro-ecological Region 2 of the country which produces a lot of grain and other food stuffs for the nation. The Shona society also engaged in some artisan work like mining among others (p. 9).

Chief Nyan'ombe is a senior bachelor who has reached marriageable age and wants to marry the most beautiful woman befitting a chief. Such a woman is only found in Chief Pfumojena's land. Her name is Chipochedenga, Pfumojena's beautiful daughter whom he did not want to get married. Instead, Pfumojena would rather have his daughter act as a trophy to be admired by his subjects during his numerous planned social functions in which they just feasted and admired the chiefs' daughter (p. 18). Anyone who dares to come near Chipochedenga is killed by the chief. To add to this, Pfumojena is a tyrant who, through his "traditional medical practitioners," falsely accuses people of witchcraft and also of treason. Those who are accused of such are killed and Pfumojena takes over their homesteads, farm lands and cattle. As a result, Pfumojena accumulates his wealth by stealing from his subjects in this way (p. 37). Some people who are lucky enough and do not get killed after these false accusations live in servitude working for the chief in his fields or herding the cattle (which he acquired unscrupulously) for no payment (p. 37).

Since the most beautiful and eligible young lady who befits to be the chief's daughter is in Pfumojena's land, Nyan'ombe sends his most trusted army commander, Feso, to go and get the most beautiful woman for him to marry. Feso embarks on an adventure to chief Pfumojena's land. The journey is not without challenges as Feso meets some dissidents who have run away from Pfumojena's dictatorship and now live in the jungle (p. 27). He further faces some challenges at Pfumojena's palace but he as an eponymous character, overcomes the challenges and manages to successfully take Chipochedenga back to Nyan'ombe (p. 42). Chief Nyan'ombe and his people accept Chipochedenga and she is crowned the queen of the

VaNyai people. With time Pfumojena, learns that his daughter is at Nyan'ombe's palace and he follows her. War breaks out between Pfumojena and Nyan'ombe. Initially Nyan'ombe is defeated and Pfumojena takes back his daughter. Unbeknown to him that his daughter, now the queen of the VaHota people, had planned with her husband to set an ambush on Pfumojena during his numerous feasting and drinking functions. Eventually, Nyan'ombe ambushes Pfumojena after such a feasting function and all of Pfumojena's soldiers, who were drunk, are easily defeated. Nyan'ombe takes back his wife.

The defeat of Pfumojena by Nyan'ombe marks the restitution of Nyan'ombe's lands and that of the VaNyai people who had been evicted by Pfumojena. The story in *Feso* is largely regarded as an allegory of the control for land between the indigenous people and the white settlers of Rhodesia. This has been clearly presented through the relationship between Pfumojena and his subjects; and also the war between Pfumojena and Nyan'ombe. Pfumojena likely represents the colonial empire which usurps power from the indigenous people and neighbouring states. The novel ends by resolving the land issue between Pfumojena and Nyan'mbe amicably, for Nyan'ombe regains all his lands. To this Vambe (2006: 267) says, "Inside *Feso* Mutsware resolves the land question in a harmonious way. Outside the novel this preferred ending was undercut by land struggles among Africans that are depicted as taking place in post-independent Zimbabwe." Thus peaceful restoration as portrayed in *Feso* is not what exactly prevails in post-independent Zimbabwe for there are continuous struggles on land ownership which up to now have not yet been resolved.

5.2.2 A Synopsis of *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* (1967)

Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe by Patrick Chakaipa was first published in 1967. Superficially, the novel is a social critique of the progressive disintegration of Kufahakurambwe's family as a result of excessive beer drinking. Some families portrayed in the novel, though they have not totally collapsed like Kufahakurambwe's family, have also suffered the effects of alcoholism which is now practised by many people in the native reserves in the novel. Other families in the Guvi (p.108) reserve area have also suffered because of excessive beer drinking. On the deeper level, the novel portrays how the indigenous people (both men and women) have been dispossessed by the colonial establishment which has availed new methods of acquiring and owning land in the colony.

The novel revolves around Kufahakurambwe and his family who are now resident on Vhuka's farm where Kufahakurambwe works as a foreman (p. 3). Many people in the surrounding reserves also desire to be at Vhuka's farm because it is the only place where they can get some form of livelihood. The surrounding reserves are barren, infertile and unfit for human habitation. It is only the selected 'lucky' few who manage to go and work on the farm. The farm offers security in terms of accommodation - farm workers are accommodated there and are presumed to have a better source of livelihood for they live on food rations and hand-outs from the farmer (p. 21). The black people have very few options and their future and aspirations revolve around working on the farm. One of the few options the people pursue in the surrounding reserves is brewing beer for sale as a source of livelihood (p. 53). The people cannot grow any meaningful crops to sustain themselves in the barren areas they have been condemned to by the white colonial settler. The brewing of beer for sale is neatly captured where Kufahakurambwe says:

Kumusha zvino kwaipa chaizvo. Kare hwahwa hwaiva hwenhimbe kana hwokunwa pachena. Izvozvi zvavava kuti mharadzo inonwirwa kumusha, kuda kunoita doro rehoka mwanasinahembe. Munofunga kuita here ikoku amai vaPaurosi? Kugara nokugara kwakaita madzitateguru edu makambonzwa zvichinzi hwahwa hwaitengeswa muno mumusha? Iyesu patiri nhasi takakura tisingazivi kuti mhamba inotengeswa, takatozvionera muchirungu (p. 2).

(The rural areas are now very bad. In the past beer was only for work parties or just to drink for free. Now that the beer to mark the end of a work party is now drunk at home and not in the fields where the work is done, means that people now want to sell beer for work party. Do you think this is right mother of Paurosi? Ever since the times of our ancestors, have you ever heard that beer was sold in our home areas. We grew up not knowing that beer was for sale, we first learnt of that in the colonial establishments.)

From the foregoing, women in the native reserves have been reduced to brewing beer for a living, something unheard of in traditional pre-colonial societies. The barren reserves they have been allocated cannot sustain them as well as growing any meaningful crops. The fertile areas have been taken by white people such as Vhuka who owns large tracts of land and whose location is in fertile areas where crops thrive well (p. 3). When Kufahakurambwe comes back from the reserves cycling and gets to Vhuka's farm he attests to the rich fertile soils on Vhuka's farm and the vast area covered by the farm (p. 3). Thus the indigenous black

people, both male and female are left with no option because their source of livelihood, the land has been taken away. This loss of the source of livelihood has led to disillusionment. According to Scoones (1998), it is critical for people to have natural resources that include water, vegetation, wildlife resource and land, among other things, in order for them to be able to earn a sustainable livelihood. The grabbing of land from the indigenous people first by the Portuguese and then the British settlers meant that it became difficult for the indigenous people, both men and women to sustain their livelihoods. Without any source of livelihood to fall back on, the indigenous women then resorted to the brewing of beer for sale in the newly created reserves.

In the novel, Kufahakurambwe and other few people, men, women and children now work on Vhuka's farm. Kufahakurambwe is the farm foreman who has been handpicked by Vhuka to assist him manage his farm by supervising other black workers who work on the farm. Like any other colonial master on the farms, Vhuka begins growing tobacco on the farm, not staple grains such as maize that would be used as food by the surrounding community. Instead he grows tobacco, the golden leaf which gives him money, attesting the fact that the colonial farm establishment was for wealth creation at the expense of the indigenous people.

The indigenous labourers are timed to work by a bell. It is Vhuka who decides what is supposed to be grown and on what day. Indigenous men and women have been stripped of this role they previously enjoyed of deciding what they should plant on the land, their forefathers' land. The farm labourers can even work on Christmas day (p. 25-28). At times when there is a significant amount of work to be done on the farm, Vhuka seeks extra cheap labour from the surrounding areas. Kufahakurambwe is the one who is sent to look for such labour. When he goes to the reserves he normally forgets to come back to work early and engages in beer drinking binges resulting in his failure to return on time. He sometimes returns to work after four days of absence. It is on one such occasion that Vhuka finally dismisses Kufahakurambwe because the foreman is no longer responsible and reliable (p.44). Kufahakurambwe is dismissed from work and after his dismissal, Wadyazheve, the farm school teacher takes over the foremanship; and Kufahakurambwe and his family are banished to his home area in the nearby native reserve (p.73).

Upon arrival in the native reserve Kufahakurambwe and his wife, Mai Mavis competes in beer drinking binges. While the husband and wife are immersed in alcohol, their daughter, Mavis, takes over the management of the household. She is the one that works hard to find food for the family. With the assistance of Mai Paurosi, a committed woman who works hard growing crops on the unrelenting barren land, Mavis is able to put food on the table for the family (p. 82). She also sells some of the crops and has some surplus money which she puts aside for herself for future use. In spite of her thrift, the money she puts aside is stolen by her mother who spends it in beer drinking (p. 86). Kufahakurambwe further runs down the family property by selling the few beasts he had and spends all the money on beer. Due to the absence of parental guidance Mavis and Paurosi engage in teenage sexual encounters and Mavis falls pregnant (p. 78). She gives birth to a baby who dies soon after birth. Her parents never follow her to the hospital because they are deeply engrossed in beer drinking. Mavis leaves home and goes to work for a white woman in the city of Gwelo (p. 94). David, her brother, goes to work on the farms and never returns. Gredhes, her sister, remains at home and continues to suffer the neglect at her parents' hands.

Subsequently, Mai Mavis befriends a married man, Mhofu, who works in the city. Together they plot to kill Kufahakurambwe so that they can easily engage in their extra marital affair without Kufahakurambwe disturbing them. Mhofu brings a bottle of brandy from the city and through this, Mai Mavis and her lover lure Kufahakurambwe to a secluded place where Mhofu axes him to death (pp. 103-104). These two culprits are eventually caught; Mhofu is given a death sentence and Mai Mavis a long jail sentence. Mavis comes back for her sister Gredhes whom she takes to the city and stays with her (pp. 104-112). Mavis eventually marries Wadyazheve. Alcoholism ostensibly destroys the Kufahakurambwe family. However, there are underlying causes worthy of exploration.

5.2.3 A Synopsis of *Pafunge* (1972)

Pafunge by Thompson Kumbirai Tsodzo to a casual reader appears to be a social satire of colonial Christianity. Characters in the novel such as Rudo Moyo, Annatoria Tichafa and Masango among others fail to get protection from the Christian values that they have imbibed. As soon as they get in contact with the hostile world they fail to stand the wicked values of the world that Christianity has tried to protect them from. However, a critical reading of the novel also depicts how Africans, both men and women have been dispossessed by the colonial establishment which has availed new methods of acquiring and owning land in the colony, namely the mission station, the reserve and the urban centres.

The novel hinges around Rudo Moyo, an orphan who is brought up at a mission station by Reverend Lovedale. Rudo's deceased mother was a devout Christian who was tricked into a doomed love relationship by Josiah Rugare who connived with his friend (Phainos Kamunda) who used to teach at Mharapara mission. When Phainos fails to win Annatoria's heart he then asks his friend Josiah Rugare to get into a convenient relationship with Annatoria who is a nurse at the Mharapara mission station where he teaches. Josiah succeeds; he impregnates Annatoria and denies responsibility. Annatoria, as a practising Christian cannot stand this, soon after giving birth to her daughter Rudo, commits suicide through an overdose of tablets (pp. 24-27). She writes a letter pleading with a missionary, Rev Lovedale, to take care of her daughter and bring her up the Christian way.

Rudo Moyo thus grows up at Mharapara mission station under the guardianship of Reverend Lovedale. There is a general shortage of schools in colonial Rhodesia and Rudo ends up getting a place at a faraway place at Mudavanhu Boarding School to study for her Junior Certificate. Rudo normally cannot make the journey to Mudavanhu in a single day, hence on her way to and from school she has to put up for the night at the train station in Gwelo. On one such occasion she meets with her so called lover who, unbeknown to both of them, happens to be her biological father, Josiah Rugare. In order to win Rudo's heart, Josiah a seasoned criminal in the city pretends to be a reverend for the Wesleyan Methodist Church. He succeeds to win Rudo's heart, on her final trip from boarding school Rudo, sleeps with Josiah and she falls pregnant.

Reverend Lovedale, through the help of Rudo's childhood friend, Winnie Nhamo, learns of Rudo's pregnancy. The clergy man confronts Rudo over the issue who in turn decides to join her boyfriend in the city of Gwelo. Upon getting to Gwelo, Rudo gets a rude awakening of who Josiah Rugare really was. Not only does she learn that he is a fake reverend of the Methodist church but also a drunkard whose form of employment is secretive. When Rudo does some thorough cleaning of her husband's room, which happens to be Masango's kitchen, she discovers through a letter that was written by her mother, Annatoria, several years before that and learns that Josiah Rugare was actually her biological father. Masango is a former devoted Christian who used to preach at Mharapara during Annatoria's days. His migration to the city has turned him into a real drunkard.

Rudo confronts Josiah Rugare with this new discovery but he labels her a prostitute, together with her late mother. This angers Rudo such that she decides to avenge the death of her mother. She manages to do this by giving Josiah an overdose of sleeping tablets which she got from Mrs Kamunda, Phainos' mother. She had met Mrs Kamunda on her first day in Gwelo when she had eloped to Josiah, her boyfriend. Josiah dies and Rudo is arrested together with some of Josiah's accomplices in his theft business. The court considers Rudo's case and pardons her. She is discharged from prison into the hands of Reverend Lovedale. Thus the novel ends when Rudo is going back to stay with Reverend Lovedale again, she is going back to her custodian who has failed to equip her in the first place with the necessary guidance that would protect her from the hostile world in the first place.

5.2.4 A Synopsis of *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* (1985)

Kuridza Ngoma nedemo by Aaron Chiundura Moyo was first published in 1985. The play was the first publication to discuss the redressing of land dispossession in post-independence Zimbabwe well before any form of government-sponsored land resettlement. It was a way of responding to the people's expectations after the war now that the black populace had gained independence but the real reason of going to war, that is regaining back the land had not been addressed. The play is set in 1985 and it focuses on a critical matter of land redistribution well before the commencement of the government resettlement programme which only

started after 1985. The play put into action the government ideological project that was taking too long to take off.

The play is set in newly independent Zimbabwe and centres on the peasants who had been dispossessed by the colonial legislations. The characters in the play, after experiencing the harsh effects of land dispossession, find it better to participate in the liberation struggle and regain their land. Some of them lose their families, homes and all the things they owned as a result of the brutality of the colonial regime which was bent on preventing peasants from regaining their land. It punished these peasants heavily by burning their homesteads, killing them, and also killing their family members. So soon after independence these peasants feel that this is the very opportune time for them to take back their land. Once they hear that the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) had won the elections they were so much filled with joy and believed that their wishes, hopes and aspirations; all that they had fought for was going to be fulfilled. The peasants, both men and women quickly moved on to the under-utilised white man's farms or invaded farms that were utilised. They displaced the white farmers who sought refuge in the law-enforcement agents to assist them evict the black new settlers from their farms.

Tinazvo, leading a group of peasants and their families occupy a white man's farm. These peasants believe that they are fulfilling the goals of the liberation struggle of regaining back the black people's land. Both men and women participate in this process of invading farms in the early period of independence. Moyo neatly captures this fulfilment of the black people's aspirations where Tinazvo says to his ex-combatant son, Saraoga whose war name is Hondo, who has just returned from the war:

Patakangonzwa kuti jongwe rahwina takabva tangoita murambamhuru tichiuya mupurazi rino. Dai ndisina kuzoita zvekusarura vanhu kwavo, nzvimbo ingadai yatove diki. Munhu chipfuwo haadi kuona pane chisango chine mafuro kwawo. Zvino pano tiri kuita vekupepeti sezviyo. Vhunza amai vako ava vagere apa ava. Taurirai mwana amai bhoi (Vave kuseka) (p. 39).

...Wave kupenga mwana. Uri kuda kundinyadzisa manje mukati mevanhu vangu. Munhu wakomuredhi anoda kutya mupurisa here chaizvo? Ndopinda pai nokunyara nhai Hondo? Unoziva kuti, ini handina munhu andakadenha kwete. Purazi rino takabvuta kubva kumubhunu asina musoro. Uyu ndiwo mubayiro weduwo wenhamo dzatakaona muhondo. Hapana airara mumba napamusana penyaya dzenyika. Kana

amai vako ava, vairova morari yakaoma kwazvo. Huku, mbudzi dzangu dzose ndakapedza ndichibikira imi vana kuti murove hondo makasimba. Kana mbatya ndaitenga. Mombewo ndidzo dzakabvutiwa namabhunu. Musha wose wakapiswa ndokusara ndangova kugara pamhene. Izvi hazvina kundigumbura nokuti ndaiziva kuti taiva tiri muhondo. Zvino hondo yapera kudai izvi muri kuda kuti tirambe tichingogara mumasango here mabhunu achingotambisa nyika yedu kudai. Saka mwana handisi kuda kumbokuvanzira pano handisi kuzobva (p. 43).

(When we heard that ZANU PF had won, we quickly rushed to occupy this farm. If I had not screened the new settlers this farm would have been very small. Human beings are like animals they quickly rush to greener pastures. But here we are screening people who can join us on this farm. Ask your mother who is seated over there. Tell your child mother of our son (They laugh)

... You are not serious my son. You want to disgrace me amongst my people. How can an ex-freedom fighter fear a policeman? Where do you want me to hide after you have disgraced me? You know I have not wronged any one, no. This farm we forcefully got it from a white farmer who was underutilising it. This is our reward for all the problems we faced during the war because of this land issue. Even your mother here also participated in *pungwe* meetings. All my chickens and goats got finished when we slaughtered them for the freedom fighters such that they could get the energy to fight this war. I even bought clothes for the freedom fighters. Also, my cattle were stolen by the white man. My homestead was burnt down and I was left with no decent place to live. This did not dismay me because I knew that we were fighting a war. Now that the war is over you want us to continue living in the barren areas whilst the white man is underutilising the fertile land like this? So my son, I do not want to lie to you; I am not vacating this farm).

Peasants represented by Tinazvo believe that end of the war signalled a new dispensation in which they could fulfil the aspirations of the liberation struggle that is taking back their land. However, the ex-combatant now know the government policy of reconciliation and that the ordinary people like the peasants cannot just take land like what Tinazvo and his group have done. Hondo and Shinga, the ex-freedom fighters encourage their parents to go back to the barren areas and to only wait for the government's resettlement programme. They are encouraged to only occupy land which they would have been legally allocated by the government (p. 44). The ex-fighters encourage the peasants to wait for the government's land resettlement programme even though it has not yet commenced; this is why Hondo keeps telling his father to occupy land which has been allocated to him by the government.

The government sends its law-enforcement agents to remove people who have occupied the farms. Firstly, the white man sends his farm security guard, Toro, to tell the peasants to

vacate his farm. Toro is thoroughly beaten by the peasants; they fail to understand why a black person, takes sides with the white man in perpetuating the dispossession of land. As a black person, Toro, is supposed to take sides with the peasants and allow them to stay on the farm which they have repossessed from the white man. The farm is regarded as a reward for all the problems they have faced during the war.

The white man relies on these law enforcement agents sent by the government to evict the peasants from the farm. Even though the new settlers beat up the policeman; the peasants represented by Tinazvo and his group know that the government does not approve of them forcibly taking away land from the white man. This explains why the government continuously sends the law-enforcement agents to evict them from the white man's farm. The peasants think that the arrival of their ex-combatant children marks the beginning of a new war against the policemen who want them to vacate the farm. Instead Tinazvo and his colleagues are baffled by what Hondo and Shinga say. These two ex-combatants make it clear that they are not taking part in a war of forcefully taking away land from the white farmer. Hondo says to his father, "*Yangu hondo ndakarwa ikapera baba. Iyi yamave kutaura a, ndeyenyuwo. Hamufi makaikunda nokuti haina gwara*" (p. 44). (I have fought my war and won it my dear father. This war you are making reference to is yours. You will never win it because it has no real focus.)

To add to this, the peasants have also rejected the doctrine of reconciliation which the newly independent government has taken; extending a hand of peace to its former enemies and "turn[s] swords into plough shares" (Mugabe, 1980 cited in Mazuruse, 2010). Thus the peasants have no knowledge of this concept of reconciliation and hence reject it. They seek retribution on the grudges of the war. Tinazvo rejects Shinga as his daughter-in-law because her father, Rukato, was a sell-out during the war. Rukato had caused a lot of suffering amongst Tinazvo and his colleagues' families during the war. For Tinazvo, the search for Rukato is still on in order to seek revenge for the evils he has committed against his family during the war (p. 48). The peasants are still bitter about the war. War ideologies during *pungwe* meetings preached repossession of stolen farms from the white man soon after independence. Peasants failed to discern that this was war propaganda which was only used as a vehicle for mobilising as well as conscientising the masses. At the end of the war, the ex-

freedom fighters move into a new dispensation; they know very well that what they preached during *pungwe* meetings was unrealistic. This is the reason why Hondo and Shinga re-educate the peasants and tell them to go back and live in the reserves, the barren areas they were dumped to by the colonial government.

The play ends by showing this disillusionment amongst the peasants. They feel betrayed when they are prohibited by law to live on the white men's farms. The peasants also reject the ideology of reconciliation. Tinazvo sends away Shinga because she was the daughter of a sell-out who operated in their area during the liberation struggle. The fact that Shinga herself was a freedom fighter who fought to liberate the country which they now seem to enjoy is totally forgotten. The play ends by showing that the peasants, both male and female feel that they have been betrayed and cheated by the new government which still forces them to go and live in barren areas after the attainment of independence with no redress to their plight in sight. The battle for liberation has all been in vain; instead, the white man will continue to occupy the fertile lands while blacks live in barren reserves that are unfit for human habitation.

5.2.5 A Synopsis of *Vavairo* (1990)

Vavairo by Raymond Morgan Choto was published in 1990. It was the second work of Shona fiction after *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* (1985) to daringly discuss the disillusionment and betrayal that the peasants felt after the newly post-independent government of Zimbabwe's failure to redistribute land as was promised during the liberation struggle. The novel revolves around Comrade Tumirai who leads a group of Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) forces to fight against the Rhodesia Front army in the Murewa-Uzumba area during the last days of the liberation struggle from around 1977-1979. The novel also goes further to present the early years of independence up to about 1982.

The novel presents Tumirai and other ZANLA forces who are operating in headman Charira's village in Murewa and they get the full backing of *mujibhas* (young adult boys) and *chimbwidos* (young adult girls) and the parents, *vabereki* who constitute mainly dispossessed peasants in waging the war against the Smith regime. Upon arrival in Murewa area, Comrade

Tumirai and his colleagues ask for a meeting with the whole village in which he introduces the freedom fighters and summarises the aims, goals and purpose of the liberation struggle. The main purpose of the liberation struggle which is clearly articulated by Tumirai to the villagers during the *pungwe* (night meetings) was to regain the black people's land which was violently taken away by the white colonial settlers. Tumirai highlights that the main purpose of the war is to regain the fertile land that black people had lost to white colonial masters (p. 22).

However, soon after independence, the peasants are disillusioned by the turn of events. The efforts and the sacrifices they had made during the war are not duly rewarded in post-independence Zimbabwe. For the peasants independent Zimbabwe is ushered in because of the sacrifices they made and the pivotal role they played during the struggle. As promised during the war, VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi and a group of other peasants together with their families immediately occupy an abandoned white farm. They spontaneously invade Dereki's farm soon after the war to fulfill their main purpose of participating in the struggle. Choto skilfully captures this where he says:

Nokuti hondo yakanga yapera uyezve Musangano wavo wakanga wakunda, VaKanyuchi naVaChimoto vakaenda kundogara kupurazi raDereki. Vakagovana dzimba dzokugara pane dzimwe dzimba dzakanga dzisina kupiswa nenzvimbo dzokurima. Vakadyara mbeu dzavo hurumende isingazvizivi nokuti purazi raDereki raiva kure, riri kwaro rega. Vakakohwa zvinhu zvavo vakatengesa kuGrain Marketing Board. 'Ndizvo tairwira izvi, komuredhi', vakadaro VaKanyuchi vachiudza VaChimoto apo vainwa doro. 'Tiri kutonga zvechokwadi muZimbabwe. Dzimba dzanaDereki nhasi uno dzava dzedu. Iyi ndiyo inonzi indipendenzi zveshuwa,' vakadaro VaChimoto vachitambidza VaKanyuchi mukombe wedoro (p. 149).

(Because the war had ended and also their party had won the election, Mr Kanyuchi and Mr Chimoto took over Dereki's farm. They distributed Dereki's houses that had survived the war and farmland among themselves. They planted crops without the knowledge of the government that Dereki's farm had been occupied, this is because this farm was in a secluded area far away from the rest of the farms. They harvested their produce and sold it to the Grain Marketing Board. 'This is what we fought for comrade,' said Mr Kanyuchi to Mr Chimoto as they were relaxing over a beer.' We are really ruling Zimbabwe for sure. Derekis's houses are now ours. This is what we call real independence for sure,' said Mr Chimoto handing over a gourd of beer to Mr Kanyuchi).

For them, taking over of the white man's fertile farm land was the main reason of going to war in the first place. The peasants, represented by VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi and their

families are happy to have regained the land as was expected by all those who fought the war. The post-war situation seemed to have yielded the fruits of taking up arms and waging the liberation struggle.

However, the joys and celebration of the gains of independence by the Chimoto and Kanyuchi families is short lived. This is because when the authorities in government get the wind of the information that there are some peasants who have occupied the white man's farm, they come to warn them of the repercussions of their actions and clearly tell the peasants to vacate the farm for it legally belongs to Dereki's relatives and not the peasants. They urge the new occupants that the relatives of the deceased white man wish to take over the property of their relative and continue with the farming activities that were previously practised there. The Member of Parliament (MP) for Murewa area, Nhamoyetsoka who is supposed to represent his constituency, the peasants in parliament, comes down to sternly caution VaChimoto and his friends to quickly vacate the farm and go back to their homes in the so-called reserves where the white man had condemned them to. Nhamoyetsoka says to the peasants who have now settled on Dereki's farm:

Ndini Comrade Nhamoyetsoka, ndauya kuzotaura nemi makomuredzi mose muri pano. Nyaya iripo ndeyekuti ini saMember of Parliament anomirira nzvimbo ino, ndakaudzwa kuti pane vanhu vari kugara papurazi rino zvisiri pamwero...Chinzwaika makomuredzi, zviripo ndezvekuti hurumende yevanhu yamakasaruudza mega iri kukumbira kuti mubve pano. Muri kupihwa mwedzi mitatu yekuti mudzokere kwamakabva (p. 150).

(I am Comrade Nhamoyetsoka, and have come to talk to you comrades who are on this farm. The real issue is that, I, as a Member of Parliament who represents this area was informed that there are some people who are illegally staying here...Listen comrades, the truth of the matter is that the government of the people, that you have duly elected, is begging you to leave this farm. You are being given three months' notice for you to leave this farm and go back to your homes where you came from)

VaChimoto and the other peasants together with their families cannot conceive what the MP is saying because to them. They believe the main reason for going to war was to repossess the black people's land which had been taken away by white colonial masters. The peasants begin to doubt Nhamoyetsoka's war credentials for he seems ignorant of what the people fought for and what was promised to them during the liberation struggle. Mrs Chimoto, Sekesai's mother says to Nhamoyetsoka, "*Imi komuredhi imi mune magirazi, muri kuziva*

here kuti hondo yatairwa yaiva yekurwira ivhu ramakatsika iro?" (p. 150). (You Comrade with spectacles, are you aware that the war that we fought was to regain the land that you are rightfully standing on?). Mrs Chimoto reminds the elitist MP who seems to have forgotten the main purpose of the liberation struggle. Such people had to be quickly whipped into line by being reminded the truth as does Mrs Chimoto to Nhamoyetsoka.

Despite listening to the peasants' grievances, Nhamoyetsoka still does not care about his constituency's plight. He is bent on following to the latter emulating what his fellow member of parliament, a white MP for Mazowe has advised – that is evicting illegal settlers. Nhamoyetsoka gives the peasants three months' notice to vacate the farm and make way for its rightful owners, Dereki's relatives. The peasants are sceptical of Nhamoyetsoka. At the end of the notice period the MP sends earth moving equipment such as bulldozers, police officers and unleashes these on the peasants. Eventually, he violently evicts the peasants from Dereki's farm back to the reserves (p. 150). The peasants ultimately leave the farm under duress but feel betrayed by the former freedom fighters whom they had fed during the war. They are disappointed by the current government which still expects them to go and stay in the impoverished areas where they had been condemned to by the white man. To make matters worse, the mode of removal leaves an indelible mark on the peasants for they are evicted like criminals; their crime being the fulfilment of the cause of the liberation struggle.

However, VaChimoto who worked very closely with Tumirai during the liberation struggle vividly remembers the promise that he had made to them during the war and decides to visit Tumirai in the city. Tumirai is now a member of parliament for Dande and Mandava; and VaChimoto wants first-hand knowledge from him about what is really happening since they were evicted from a white man's farm which they felt were justifiably occupying (p. 132). Tumirai plainly tells VaChimoto to vacate the farm and that if he really requires land; he should consider joining the government- sponsored resettlement programme. During his visit to Tumirai, VaChimoto realises that the independence that black Zimbabweans have, is only flag independence and not economic independence. Land and other resources still belong to the white man and hence there is a new war that still needs to be fought in order for them to recoup the land, and the new economic struggle will be done through dialogue and not an armed struggle. Tumirai says to Mr Chimoto, "*Iye zvino upfumi huchiri mumaoko evaRungu.*

Ichi ndicho chokwadi VaChimoto. Hatisati tava noupfumi...” (p. 157). (Right now the economy is still in the hands of the white man. This is the real truth Mr Chimoto. We have not yet achieved economic independence). Instead Tumirai advises VaChimoto to go to the resettlement farms that the government has introduced and not to settle on a white man’s farm (pp. 157-159).

Furthermore, during his visit to Tumirai’s place VaChimoto learns that only a few black elites like Tumirai and Nhamoyetsoka have really benefitted from the struggle. Not everyone had benefited. Tumirai now owns two cars, a posh house in the secluded and ambient suburb of Grange and he has a maid and a gardener (pp.55-57). Another beneficiary, Jeri, has bought land in the exclusive area of Christon Bank where he is practising market gardening; and selling his produce to the elite of Harare (p.148).

The novel ends with VaChimoto’s renewed commitment to go and work very hard to fend for his family and not to occupy the white man’s farm. He is even committed to fix his dilapidated houses; he is buying asbestos sheets to repair his dilapidated houses which fell into disrepair during his absence whilst he was at Dereki’s farm (p. 158). The renewed commitment to spruce up his home means that VaChimoto now intends to stay at his home in the reserves and not occupying white man’s farm. Accordingly, the peasants feel that they have been betrayed by the ex-freedom fighters whom they fed during the war. Their hopes are shattered for they fail to perceive why, after making so many sacrifices during the liberation struggle, only a few elites such as Jeri, Tumirai and Nhamoyetsoka have really benefitted from this liberation struggle. Even after Tumirai’s explanation about the resettlement programme VaChimoto is not convinced that the government is committed to making the lives of the peasants better through land redistribution for he says, “*Chirega zvako kundibvunza zvakawanda, mwana wamai. Unoti ndichabva zvakare pamba pangu?*” (p.154). (Do not worry about asking me with many questions my dear brother. Would you think I would ever leave my home again?). Thus Choto has amply captured the peasants’ disillusionment and betrayal at the end of the liberation struggle when peasants both male and female represented by VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi together with their families failed to get the land after making so many sacrifices during the war.

Choto nevertheless tries to explain that there is still hope for the dispossessed peasants through Tumirai's long lecture to VaChimoto on resettlement schemes' *minda mirefu* (long fields) that the government has introduced as a strategy of regaining land that had been taken away from dispossessed blacks. Though VaChimoto pretends to have heard Tumirai's advice, deep down in his heart he is distrustful of everyone. He is now sceptical about the new government and what is becoming like persistent empty promises. He vows to go and stay at his home in the reserve that is why he is repairing his homestead because he has found that these promises were just empty promises that were made during the war. Tumirai reiterates to VaChimoto that the promises made during the war were for the purposes of boosting the morale of both the peasants and the guerrillas. This, the peasants were not supposed to take cursorily and casually implement such promises as is done by VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi and their wives. The peasants realise that taking war promises at face value has landed people into real trouble as exemplified by the eviction of the peasants who had spontaneously occupied Dereki's farm. Just like in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo*, peasants who had spontaneously occupied the white man's farm are evicted and dumped into the reserves as had happened during the colonial period. This is a repetition of the history of forced removals that characterised the 1960s that had come back. Ironically blacks in the novels, both men and women, are re-living these forced removals in post-independent Zimbabwe. To add on to this, the removals this time are executed by a black independent government which is supposed to protect its citizens but instead acts otherwise. Independence therefore has not contributed any meaningful change to the lives of blacks for the better for they are still prohibited from taking over the white man's farm.

5.2.6 A Synopsis of *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005)

Sekai Minda Tave Nayo by Davie Mutasa was published in 2005. It was the first work of Shona fiction to boldly discuss gender and land redistribution in post-independent Zimbabwe. In some earlier works, which focused on land redistribution in post-independent Zimbabwe, such as *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* (1985) and *Vavariro* (1990) women still owned land through the traditional ways of ownership where they accessed it through their male kindred. *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* breaks this tradition and daringly discusses land ownership in post-independent Zimbabwe in terms of gender, race, class, ethnicity, age and party affiliation. It

gives a holistic picture of the contemporary land reform programme. The novel *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* which when literally translated means ‘laugh or rejoice we now have the land’ highlights the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) that gathered momentum in 2001. It explores the FTLRP elucidating its nature, strengths, weaknesses and gives possible intervention strategies in future land reform programmes in Zimbabwe.

The novel revolves around Sekai Jeritha Mbanda who initially has been forbidden from attending school by her father whose view of educating a girl-child is rather negative. Sekai’s father, the patriarchal head of the family, believes that educating a girl-child is wasting time and resources. Sekai is rescued from such patriarchal beliefs by her aunt, her father’s sister who takes her to Harare against her father’s will. The male patriarch of the family believes that Sekai should not get educated if ever she wants to do so she would be educated by her husband. Sekai’s father believes that the main role of a girl-child is to get married and bear children for her husband (p. 14). Sekai’s aunt thinks otherwise and whisks her to Harare where she goes to school and completes her primary education. After her primary education, Sekai enrolls at a boarding school at Silveira Secondary School in Bikita where she meets Upenyu and Zakaria. The novel unravels through the exchange of letters between Sekai who is the central character of the novel and her ex-school mates, and also between Sekai and her family members.

After completing her A Level Sekai is fortunate enough to get a bursary and enrolls at the University of Illinois in the United States of America where she pursues a degree in Agriculture and Environmental Studies (p. 43). While in the United States of America, Sekai becomes an ambassador for the Zimbabwean government’s Fast Track Land Reform Programme. She justifies why Zimbabwe has redistributed land to its black landless majority who had been dispossessed by the colonial regime (pp. 45-54).

Sekai graduates *cum-laude* at the University of Illinois. Upon the completion of her studies in the United States of America, Sekai returns home. She gets a job in the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture (p. 92). In her new portfolio she is tasked with overseeing the government’s FTLRP at national level. She is also privileged to get a farm and becomes a successful

commercial farmer who can even drive her own tractor on the farm (p.121). As the head of the FTLRP, Sekai moves around the country trying to explain to the new farm owners the nature of the FTLRP. She also emphasises that both men and women should own land in their own right not for women to continue accessing land through their husbands (p.118). Even in her debating sessions at Silveira Secondary School, she makes it clear that women even those who are not married who had been previously disadvantaged by the previous reform processes should also be allocated land (p.20). Sekai also tries to resolve and clarify some of the challenges that have embroiled the whole FTLR process through her countrywide visits. The novel ends when she has successfully visited all the various districts in the country and when most people are enlightened that the farms they have acquired are not for speculative purposes but for them to work hard and produce for family consumption, the country at large and also for export; and thus earning the much needed foreign currency for the nation.

5.3 Land as a Hallmark of Existence in African Philosophy

Land in African philosophy is depicted as a hallmark of the African people's existence. Both males and females rely on the land for their sustenance. Everything that the African people do hinges around their land. Their economy is derived mainly from agriculture both crop and animal husbandry; and subsidised by other economic activities like mining, weaving and blacksmithing. Even these subsidiary activities are also closely linked to the land. Land is also sacred among people of African descent both males and females because they bury their dead on the land and graves are sacred sites (Dande & Mujere, 2015). Land among Africans is not a private commodity but is communally owned; and is distributed to people for use by the chiefs. The land in African cosmology is owned by the dead, the living and also the future generations, no individual can claim rightful ownership to a piece of land as happens in western worldview of private property ownership signified by title deeds (Mafa, et. al. 2015). The form of ownership in African cosmology does not exclude females; they have a way of accessing land through their male relatives for the production of crops and rearing of animals for the benefit of the family. Biri (2015: 165) precisely captures this form of ownership when she asserts that: "The land belongs to the ancestors, guarded by ancestral spirits, for the communal benefit of all descendants." Thus every individual in African traditional worldview has a right to land irrespective of gender and age.

People of African descent have a close link with the land and this explains why one's umbilical cord is buried in the ground to show this close connection with the soil, the land. Chirikure Chirikure's *Rukuvhute* (1990) underlines this connection; it skilfully demonstrates the connection between the people of African descent, both male and female, and the land. The anthology further presents that removing someone from the land is synonymous to severing the ties that links black men and women to their birth right. Land is a very important aspect in African cosmology, it is associated with fertility. Continents and countries are seen to be having feminine roles, for example 'mother Africa', they have this feminine attribute for they symbolise women who nurture human beings in their wombs during pregnancy. Countries and continents are also pregnant with living beings. The woman therefore is a symbol of land; she signifies fertility, nurturing and the season cycles just like the land. There is no way one can discuss land in African worldview without making reference to the extra-terrestrial cycles, the different seasons and different nurturing that people get. A woman just like the land after giving birth she feeds the baby through lactation as does the land which produces and feeds the nation. The aspect of gender and land in African set up is very critical for the land just like the woman is very pertinent in the lives of human beings.

The connection with the land among people of African descent is also brought out in the use of the phrase "mwana wevhu" (child of the soil) during the liberation struggle. The use of the phrase "mwana wevhu" further highlights this close linkage of the people of African descent, both male and female with the land; it gives them some form of irrevocable identity in which land was communally owned as a heritage for all descendants (Biri, 2015: 165). Wilson Katiyo's novel *A Son of the Soil* (1976) also centres upon black people who leave the country to go and train in other countries in order for them to fight for their birth right, the land. According to Magosvongwe (2013) to take African people away from the land is synonymous to uprooting them and leaving them with no anchor and no form of identity. The reason why blacks had to wage the liberation struggle was because their main source of livelihood, their anchorage, and birth right, the land had been taken away from them (Magosvongwe, 2013). Some of the selected fictional writers have also depicted land as the hallmark of existence in African philosophy, which is the source of livelihood for both men and women in pre-colonial African societies.

5.3.1 Land as Hallmark of Existence in *Feso*

Feso portrays the pre-colonial society as self-sufficient, food secure and economically viable. In this novel land is owned not in the western sense where there are individual rights to land. Instead both men and women access the land in the traditional sense which has been highlighted in the previous section. In *Feso* there is no individual ownership to land, instead it is communally owned and distributed to people by the chiefs who are the custodians of the land in African cosmology. In the African realm land belongs to the ancestors and is allocated to the people by the chiefs who are the overseers of that land. In *Feso* land is not a private property but belongs to the spiritual realm and the chiefs have the responsibility of allocating that land. No gender owned the land *per se*, this explains why chiefs who were the guardians of that land could veriment its allocation if it was not properly used.

In the novel *Feso*, land was allocated to male figureheads by the chief and women could access it through their male kindred. What has to be noted is the fact that bachelors had no right to be allocated land, they could only be allocated land once they got married, which further validates the importance of both men and women in accessing land which belonged to the spiritual world in traditional Shona society. Men in traditional societies did not own this land that is why chiefs like Pfumojena could easily take away land from people because it was not privately owned with title deeds.

The pre-colonial Shona society in *Feso* derives its sustenance from the land, in which both men and women access land through the traditional means. The self-sufficient nature and communal access to land in pre-colonial society is brought out in the opening paragraph where it is said,

Kare munyika yeMazoe mairimwa zvirimwa zvizhinji kwazvo nehurudza dzavatema dzaivemo. Waiona zviyo zvizere mumatura gore negore zvisingashayiki kana kupera.

Zve, maive namasango akanga aine miti nemharuparu dzakati twasa, dzine ngundu yamashizha namaruva pamusorosoro payo. Vanhu vakanga vasingambotambudziki kana voda kuvaka dzimba namatanga emombe neezvimwe zvipfuwo zvavakanga vakapfuwa. Mapango aive mirwi; huni dzakaisa musana kunze, dzakangoti bvumamasango; mharuparu dzokuvakisa dzimba naidzowo dzakaita rurasademo namasango (p.1).

(Long time ago, in the Mazowe area, African renowned farmers used to produce abundant grain that could last for many years.

Also, there were forests with very tall trees that had lush foliage. People never had problems when they were looking for building materials for their houses and kraals for their cattle and other domestic animals that they kept, they could easily fetch these from their forests. The forest was awash with trees for timber and firewood that they could easily fetch for their everyday use).

The bumper harvests and abundance of vegetation and grazing areas for domestic animals adequately indicates that the pre-colonial Shona society 'owned' fertile land that supported their livelihoods. The ownership of land should not be misconstrued with the western form of ownership as private property but land was a communal property which both men and women had access to. In the cited excerpt from the novel, the author does not bother to further enunciate the gender of the farmer; this is because in traditional African culture individual ownership right to land was not an issue, since it was collectively owned. Moreso, of significance is the fact that in African culture women were responsible for growing crops, which implies that these outstanding farmers were women.

To further attest the critical role played by women in agricultural production Schmidt (1990: 3) avers that, "Scholars of other parts of Africa, particularly anthropologists, have long recognized the critical role of women in agricultural production." The farmer, therefore in the traditional African set up was a woman. Russell (1932: 80) also supports that women were the prime farmers in pre-colonial Africa and argues that, "...while women gathered, men hunted; women were primarily responsible for agricultural fieldwork, while young men and boys herded livestock. In reality, women participated in a wide range of economic activities, including those frequently categorised as male." Consequently, pre-colonial society was self-sufficient and enjoyed considerable food security due to the role played by women farmers who had the primary role of providing food and farmed for the family. The *tseu*, small plots for women primarily produced food for the family. The significant role of women in providing food for the family is also brought out by the adage *musha mukadzi* (a home becomes successful as a result of a woman's industriousness). Through the portrayal of a successful agrarian society, Mutswairo is demonstrating the significant role played by women in agriculture. Even in present day societies the actual work on the farm land is done by

women and not men (Mvududu, 2000). The role played by women fits in well in the Africana Womanist paradigm in which African women are not passive but actively participate with men in farming and producing food for the family. The concept of a breadwinner being male is therefore foreign to Africa because from pre-colonial times women actively took a leading role in farming and fending for the family.

Mutswairo depicts that before colonialism the Shona people led economically sound lives in which both men and women equally participated for the well-being of the society. The indigenous people accessed productive land, though this is not clearly stated but one can decipher from the agricultural activities that were carried out there that the people of African descent had access to fertile areas and not the tsetse infested and barren areas they were dumped to by the colonial invaders (Vengeyi, 2015). Both male and female had access to this piece of fertile land. Mutswairo is bringing to the fore the fact that Africans had access to fertile land of Mazowe area which lies in the Agro-ecological Region 2 of Zimbabwe which was formerly the breadbasket of the country and the region. This region has very good rainfall, fertile soils and is conducive for the production of cereals like maize and other crops that need moderate to high rainfall and good temperatures.

In interviews with some authors they stated that, they never bothered to distinguish between male and female ownership of land because in African traditional culture women accessed land through men. Most of the authors highlighted that there was no individual ownership to land in terms of gender in pre-colonial society. Some of the interviewed authors' understanding of gender and land ownership is echoed in the following statements:

I have not discussed the disparities between men and women in terms of land ownership. My two novels on land belong to the old school and during those days land was owned by men. In an African tradition and colonial sense land was owned by men. If others read my novels and find anything that alluded to that, it would be their own interpretation, but I never looked at that. I did not sit down to intentionally write something on gender parity. I simply address things as they were then and during that time men were dominant (Interview with an author, 10 January 2016).

Traditionally a Shona woman does not 'own' land. She could be allocated land to cultivate by a male member of the family; father or father-in-law, to till for as long as she remains within the relevant family. In *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* we hear someone

articulating a new dispensation where women can own land in their own names (Interview with an author, 15 January 2016).

Such sentiments explain why authors like Mutswairo and most of the interviewed authors did not explicitly discuss land ownership according to gender. To them there was no distinction in terms of land ownership by gender because in the African set-up both men and women communally accessed the land which was owned by ancestors and allocated by chiefs to family heads who needed it. However, to say that men were dominant or to imply that women did not access land is not quite proper because a single man could not be allocated land in pre-colonial society, they could only get land after they got married, which demonstrates the importance of a woman in male allocation of land. Being married signified the rite of passage into adulthood and those are the people who were allocated land, bachelors in their own right could not be allocated land.

The interviewed authors are not stated by name because of ethics procedure which protects their confidentiality. Thus because authors were influenced and understood land ownership in the African traditional sense in which it was ‘owned’ communally; and that both men and women accessed it by virtue of being members of their pre-colonial societies. Women accessed land through their male folk while men were also allocated land by virtue of being associated with a woman through marriage. A bachelor could not be allocated land by the chief in his own right. This demonstrates that Shona traditional culture permitted the respective genders the requisite space regarding land access in the pre-colonial set-up as far as communal ownership of land was concerned. The African traditional ownership of land fits in very well in the Africana Womanist theory in which both men and women were compatible, no gender could benefit from the land resource without the other. Therefore both men and women complemented each other in order for them to communally own the land.

Mutswairo portrays Africans, both male and female accessing large tracts of land with very tall grass which symbolises a very fertile area. Vambe (2006: 265) avers that “the tall grass depicted in *Feso* portrays a mythical time of Guruuswa in which the Shona people lived cordially on their land.” He also further states that “Guruuswa is a mono-myth of stability in

which the Shona people were assumed to have had a united and intact identity. It conveys the meanings of times of plenty when land gave abundantly to its owners” (Vambe, 2006: 265). Such an understanding portrays “the moral economy of the imagery of stable identities, and of plentiful land, that sustained the ideology of African cultural nationalism in the 1950s when the novel was written” (Vambe, 2006: 265). Through the imagery of Guruuswa myth, Mutswairo vividly portrays pre-colonial Shona society as a time that had fertile lands that were accessed by both men and women. In the 1950s when the novel was written, the Shona people had already begun to feel the effects of the colonial legislations that had disposed them of their land. Through the novel *Feso*, Mutswairo is pointing that the black people’s lives had been better in the past when they collectively owned fertile lands; they were neither poor nor desperate for the land which had now been taken away from them. Also, to be taken note of is the fact that both men and women owned this land collectively, women were not marginalised from accessing the land as what later happened in colonial times. Both men and women lived harmoniously as they accessed the resources endowed to their communities together. Living harmoniously with men demonstrates that the African women are not self-centred as feminists do but are concerned with the well-being of their whole family, husband and children included

To add to this, there is mention of many herds of cattle in the novel. The chief and his people own a lot of cattle as opposed to what was happening in the 1950s colonial Rhodesia. Chief Nyan’ombe, a name which when literally translated means owner of cattle denotes one who owns cattle in abundance (Vambe, 2006). Connotatively this also means the chief possessed vast pieces of grazing land to cater for the large herds of cattle. This also denotes the fact that before destocking of the African herd, the pre-colonial Shona society owned large herds of cattle. It signifies that pre-colonial Shona society had access to large grazing areas that could support these large herds of cattle which could freely roam the land in search of grazing areas. In ownership of resources such as land in pre-colonial society, both men and women owned these resources collectively. Women in pre-colonial Shona society also owned cattle especially those that were bred from the *mombe yeumai* (bridewellth cow) which was given to mother of the bride upon the marriage of her daughter. Women could also grow their own herd from such cattle which the husband’s family was never allowed to touch for such cattle belonged to the woman and her kindred. This amply demonstrates that both men and women owned cattle that could freely roam in search of grazing areas.

Mandova and Wasosa (2012) have also noted that the Shona pre-colonial society in *Feso* communally owned fertile areas, men and women included, that enabled them to produce enough food for their communities. They also note that cattle breeding was an important economic activity among the pre-colonial Shona society in *Feso*. They state that “The Shona people were in absolute control of their economic life...and their land. Their land yielded abundant harvests. The economy was diversified with cattle rearing as another branch of the economy that regulated the people’s diet...Forests provided people with firewood and building material” (Mandova & Wasosa, 2012: 1946). Accordingly, Mutswairo gives a picture of an economically stable and harmonious community which derives its sustenance from the land which they communally owned irrespective of gender.

The fact that both men and women had access to land which was owned communally in pre-colonial society as depicted by Mutswairo in *Feso*, is also supported by some of the interviewees who stated that in terms of gender and land ownership in pre-colonial Shona society women accessed land through their male relatives and did not have to fight for individual ownership as prevalent in contemporary society. Referring to women’s private ownership of land in pre-colonial Shona society some respondents stated that:

This was not a matter that has been treated in Shona literature since women did not at any time speak against the patrilineal values and procedures of distributing land. In Shona culture land belongs to the husband’s family and a woman is given a piece of land as *tseu yenzungu* (a small plot to grow groundnuts). She was given her own piece of land when she becomes a grandmother. That is the case in my home area in the Chibi South region of Masvingo province. Gender and land ownership became an issue during the fast track land distribution exercise since women were also entitled to land ownership. It was when gender and land ownership became an issue and literature started to reflect such issues that women were considered for land redistribution. That is the case in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* by Davie Mutasa. Before this period land was only to be owned by men in Zimbabwe that is why in 1994, during Presidential Question and Answer Time the president Robert Mugabe said “*vakadzi mapanduka*” (women you have become rebellious) when answering a question raised by one woman by the name Monica. Monica had asked the President why women were not entitled to land ownership (Field Notes, January 2016).

That land is not a preserve of men but that all productive individuals regardless of sex need to benefit for the good of the nation. Land ownership need not be sexist and discriminatory across the polity (Field Notes, February 2016).

Land is owned and controlled by men. Women are given pieces where they can cultivate crops that are not significant in terms of food security. They are given pieces where they can grow crops like groundnuts and *rukweza*, which are all at a small scale and do not have the potential to economically empower them (women) (Field Notes, March 2016).

This lays bare the fact that gender and land ownership was not a contentious issue in pre-colonial Shona society since women accessed land through their husband's family who owned land communally under the African ownership philosophy. What all these respondents fail to decipher is the fact that even men did not individually own this land but collectively owned it together with their wives. As stated earlier on, no bachelor could be allocated land unless he was married, it was only the association with the female gender that entitled men allocation of land by the chief. Consequently, both genders men and women needed each other in order to be allocated land in the pre-colonial set-up, no gender could do without the other. To view men as owners of the land in their own right is a misnomer since men also accessed land through marriage. This exhibits that Shona culture empowered women through cultural institutions to collectively access land. This is what Africana Womanism calls for, the use of culture to empower the African women; that is empowering women through cultural institutions like marriage. Therefore both genders, men and women collectively accessed land in the African traditional set up.

The respondents also bring out the fact that land was not a private property in pre-colonial Shona society but it belonged to the husband's family who owned it in the communal sense. The husband's family inherited it from the ancestors. Moreso, another respondent supported that women had access to land in pre-colonial societies. He said when responding to the question of whether gender and land ownership had been a subject of Shona literature "Not at all! This is because the issue of gender has not been an issue in pre-colonial Zimbabwe- all were equal and land belonged to all regardless of one's sexuality- women also had pieces of land for themselves" (Field Notes, March 2016). These responses amply demonstrate that women had access to land in pre-colonial societies; the issue of competing for ownership according to gender was non-existent since both men and women accessed land irrespective

of gender. Land was communally owned in the African traditional set up and both men and women had access to it.

Some scholars support this communal ownership of land in African pre-colonial societies and argue that communal ownership did not exclude women. Unmarried women accessed land through their natal family. Women were part and parcel of the people who worked and enjoyed the benefits of land access just as men did. To this effect Magosvongwe (2013: 70) states that “In pre-colonial African communities women were never excluded from the land, with some being community leaders in their own right.” Logo and Bikie (2003), Fonjong, Sama-Lang, and Fon (2010), Fon (2011) and Mafa, et. al. (2015) concur with Magosvongwe and assert that before colonialism land in traditional African societies was conceptualised as a common legacy which was inherited from the ancestors. It was a communal resource which was passed from generation to generation. It was identified with a lineage or a community and was supposed to be managed without a right to be individually owned.

To further attest to women’s active involvement in the land issues in pre-colonial society, Gudhlanga (2013) asserts that there is historical evidence of women chiefs among the Manyika (an ethnic group in eastern Zimbabwe). She further states that there is historical evidence that there were headwomen who were in charge of areas to as late as 1930s-1940s. “However; at least one headwoman governed an area in Makoni reserve until the 1950s without the knowledge of the European administration” (Gudhlanga, 2013: 152). To support this female leadership and allocation of land, Mararike (cited in Muhwati and Gambahaya (2012: xviii) argues that:

Records dating back to the 17th century indicate that Ishe (chief) Mutapa had many female *madzishe* (chiefs) who administered their *matunhu* (provinces). In the 19th and early 20th centuries the daughters, sisters and paternal aunts (*madzitetete*) of the Manyika Ishe were sometimes appointed to rule over many *matunhu*. There are also references to *masadunhu echikadzi* (female provincial leaders) among the Jindwi of Zimunya / Bocha and Ishe Nemaconde’s area. Other accounts indicate that women ruled both as *masadunhu* and *madzishe* in Mutoko and Chihota.

This exhibits that women in pre-colonial society were actively involved in allocating land in some areas since they were chiefs in their own right as indicated by Mararike. As one who allocates land it also meant that in such areas they held the land as custodians like any other

chief in pre-colonial society. Consequently, women in pre-colonial society were not excluded from communal ownership of land. The novel, *Feso* amply demonstrates how Chipochedenga, chief Nyan'ombe's daughter is actively involved in strategising the war against her father, which enables Nyan'ombe to regain his land that had been taken by Pfumojena. Consequently, *Feso* depicts how both men and women in pre-colonial Shona society are actively involved in land issues; the land that they communally own.

Oral tradition also supports the role of women in strategising in order to get land. In the legend of Nehoreka who had very great powers which were envied by various chiefdoms, women played a significant role in usurping Nehoreka's power and subsequently taking over his land. One envious chief gave Nehoreka a wife. In Nehoreka's chiefdom there was a taboo that a cock should not crow in his homestead for he would lose this power. The new wife who was given to Nehoreka went with a cock and it crowed, this rendered Nehoreka powerless such that he ran away from his chiefdom and his land was taken over by the chief who had offered him a wife. Both men and women worked together to get land for it was equally important to both genders, hence they worked together to collectively own it.

There are also other novels set in the pre-colonial period that attest to land being a hallmark of existence in African cosmology, it is the source of life to both men and women in African communities who both have access to land which they communally own. Nobert Mafumhe Mutasa in *Nhume yaMambo* (1990) portrays the Shona pre-colonial society under chief Chirisamhuru communally owning land from which they derive their livelihood. The Rozvi people under Chirisamhuru are agronomists, they "own" very fertile land and grow different kind of crops, and they also rear animals to supplement their diet. The Rozvi people also get land through their chief who is their community's legitimate representative and spiritual leader. This self-sufficient nature of the pre-colonial agrarian society and allocation of land through chiefs is brought out where the narrator says:

Handeyi panyaya yezvirimwa, kune zviyo kunyanya mupunga, nemanhanga, mhunga, runinga, nyemba nenzungu. Izvi zvinoti gore rakwasuta simbe dzino pepuka dzava hurudza. Izvo zviyo zvinozadza minda pakurima, matengu pakucheka, ware pamitsitsi, uye tsapi pakuturira. Kana pava pakupura, humwe dzinobayiwa nokuimbira pakurudza zviyo zvinozadza matura kusvika pakuti cho nomuhwikwiyo (p.45)

(When it comes to the issue of crops, there were cereals especially rice, millet; pumpkins, cow peas and groundnuts. These crops were in abundance such that in years where the harvest was very good even lady people could become great farmers overnight. The cereals that were grown would in abundance in the fields and during harvest time would fill granaries)

Kana vanhu vawandisa pavagere vanokamurarana mambo achivapa nyika itsva. Isu tisu tinotumwa kunovagurira matunhu avo (p.46).

(If the land that people occupied was no longer accommodate all the people due to population pressure, they would divide themselves and the chief would allocate the surplus people new land for them to stay and farm. It is us who are sent to allocate people this new land by the chief)

Mukati mamaguta, madzishe namasadunhu ndakadzidza kuti Guruuswa yairimwa. Ungava mutorwa kana muRozvi chinhu chaigonekwa nomumwe kudarika zvose kwaiva kurima. Chero pose pataisvika taidya mupunga wakakuyiwa sorukweza tichiseva nehuku. Taiirikidzwa namashakada azere dovi renzungu, mhonzi kana runinga. Kana zviri zvokuurayirwa mbudzi ne'ombe nemhuka zvaiwandisa...Kose kwataisvika mabasa aive akawandisa uye achigovanwa. Vazhinji dzaiva hurudza kouya vafudzi, vavhimi vokutsvaga usavi, vashavi, mhizha navacheri vemigodhi (p.78).

(Amongst many cities and chiefdoms that I visited, I learnt that the traditional society had great farmers. Even though one was a foreigner or a Rozvi, one thing that everybody else excelled in was farming. Even as visitors, cattle and goats were slaughtered in our honour that were too numerous to mention...In all the areas we visited there were so many duties that were divided amongst community members. Most of the people were renowned farmers, then cattle herders, hunters to supplement domestic meat, traders, blacksmiths and those who mined gold)

In *Nhume yaMambo* (1990) Nobert Mafumhe Mutasa distinctly captures the self-sufficient nature of the pre-colonial agrarian society. The Rozvi people are agronomists, hunters as well as miners and blacksmiths. The pre-colonial society can freely hunt without being prosecuted because the land had not yet been lost to the colonialists who were dividing it up into farms and safaris which need a licence to hunt. The pre-colonial Shona society can freely hunt wild animals to supplement their diet. The chiefs are involved in land allocation to people who were previously unaccommodated on a particular piece of land. They could also easily mine on their lands without looking for mining concession rights. In all this, Shona traditional culture permitted the respective genders the requisite space regarding land access in pre-colonial societies. People could easily move on to new land because the people of African descent still collectively owned land, it had not been taken away by the colonial masters who later invaded the continent at the turn of the century.

Ignasiyo Zvarevashe's *Dzinza ravaGovera vaChirumanzu naMutasa* (1998) also attests to the fact that land is the hallmark of existence in African philosophy. In the novel Zvarevashe traces the Mutasa dynasty from Nyanga right up to Chirumanzu. In the novel the Mutasa people who represent the Shona pre-colonial society can freely move around the land without being accused of trespassing because the land was not expropriated. It still belonged to the people of African descent. The pre-colonial society also practised agriculture; they grew crops on fertile pieces of land and had not been condemned to barren areas as what later happened in the colonial period. Women still played an important role in agricultural production for they were in the forefront of producing food for the family. Land allocation was through chiefs who gave male household heads who in turn gave their male children pieces of land. It is only married men who were allocated land. Consequently, both men and women were allocated land through their association with the other gender. This is brought out where chief Govera distributes land to sons:

Govera akagadzwa umambo akatuma nhume kuti dzinoti kuvana VaNyarumwe: "Vakwira Mapwepwe havachakwiri muChirovarova! Havachasongani namamboba! Saruchera ngaaende Ruchera, Mandeya ngaaende kwaNyamhuka. Sakarombe ngaaende Karombe, Zindi aende kwaZindi!" Ndiko kuparadzirwa kwakazoitwa vana vaNyarumwe. Nanhasi vana vavana vavo ndivo vari kutonga kunzvimbo idzodzo. Vanoziva nhoroondo yokwaMutasa nhasi vanotaura revo iri: "Vakwira Mapwepwe havachakwiri muChirovarova!" (p. 4)

(Govera was installed chief and he sent his messengers to say this to Nyarumwe's children: "Those who have climbed Mapwepwe will not climb Chirovarova! They will not meet the newly installed chief! Saruchera should go to Ruchera, Mandeya should go to Nyamhuka. Sakarombe to Karombe, Zindi should go to Zindi!" This is how Nyarumwe's children were distributed in the various chiefdoms they occupy and rule today. Those who know the history of the Mutasa people always say this saying: "Those who climbed Mapwepwe will not climb Chirovarova!")

Zvarevashe clearly depicts the fact that in the pre-colonial Shona society land was given to male children who had entered the marriage institution. Govera after being installed chief, quickly allocates land to Nyarumwe's mature and married male children and not female children. The female children would access land through their male relatives, it could be their fathers, brothers, sons or even husbands. This was typical of the pre-colonial Shona society in which land was a communal resource and women could access it through their male kith and kin. Hafkin and Bay (1976: 3 cited in Gudhlanga, 2013) argue that pre-colonial African

women did not view themselves as an under-privileged class which had to fight with men in order to seek social equality because “they enjoyed more freedom and power in a complementary gender system in which they participated as active agents of development.” Therefore women collectively owned land through their male folk and never saw themselves as an under-privileged class that had no access to land. On the other hand, men also collectively owned land in the traditional set up once they got married. Both genders therefore, were accorded the requisite space regarding land access, since bachelors were not allocated land. They could only get it through their association with women.

5.4 Colonial Penetration and its Effects on Gender and Land Ownership

The coming of the Pioneer Column in Zimbabwe and the raising of the Union Jack flag in Salisbury on 12 September 1890 marked a new dispensation in land ownership. Cecil John Rhodes and his British South Africa Company (BSAC) had intended to find another gold reef in Mashonaland as they had done in South Africa. After failing to get gold they then turned to land (Mafa, et.al, 2015). This resulted in the colonial settlers plundering the fertile lands that the indigenous men and women had previously occupied and collectively owned.

As indicated in chapter two the colonial settlers instituted a number of legislations. As a way of refreshing our memory it is necessary to briefly highlight the colonial legislations that were used to expropriate land by the colonial settlers. Chief among the legislations were the Rudd Concession of 1888, The Lippert Concession of 1889, The Matabeleland Order of Council of 1894, The Land Apportionment Act of 1930, The Maize Act of 1934, The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and the Land Tenure Act of 1969. All these legislations progressively expropriated land from the indigenous people, both men and women. Of importance is the Matabeleland Order of Council which created infamous reserves for indigenous people only. This was a systematic mass land expropriation by white settlers. The result was the formation of native reserves, barren areas which later became communal areas that housed dispossessed black men and women. The Matabeleland Order of Council Act set the tone for the dispossession of indigenous people’s land by the colonial settlers. Mtetwa (2015) has observed the radical effects of the colonial legislations and states that:

Disempowerment of blacks in Zimbabwe dates back to 1894 when two waterless tracts of land Gwaai and Shangaani reserves, were allocated to the defeated and dispossessed Ndebele people by the British South Africa Company. The land was later described by British Deputy Commissioner, Sir Richard Martin in 1895 as “badly watered, sandy and unfit for settlement” (Mtetwa, 2015: 142).

Consequently, the Matabeleland Order of Council of 1894 introduced colonially induced poverty to black people because it condemned both men and women of African descent into barren areas with sandy soils which had no water and was unsuitable for human habitation as the then Deputy Commissioner rightfully attested. It also, according to Magaisa (2012: 198) “signalled the commencement of segregation and forced removals of Africans from their ancestral lands.” Muchemwa (2015: 33) concurs that these colonial legislations made sure “that from the very outset of settler occupation, African land rights were completely written off and Zimbabwean land became the property and land asset of the BSAC.” Accordingly, through these colonial legislations the indigenous people lost the land they formerly collectively owned before colonialism; both men and women had been stripped of the right to communally own land as what used to happen in pre-colonial Zimbabwean society. Instead they were condemned to what Phimister (1965: 325) rightly called ‘cemeteries’ referring to the Gwai and Shangani native reserves. The analogy of cemetery amply demonstrates that nothing grew there, there was no life and the African people, both men and women had been destined to die since nothing thrived in the barren areas that the colonial settlers had relocated Africans to.

The other colonial legislation that further entrenched what had been instituted by the Matabeleland Order of Council in the expropriation of fertile lands was the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. The Land Apportionment Act partitioned land into European and African reserves (Mafa, et. al. 2015; Tshuma, 1997). Furthermore, it forcibly removed Africans, both male and female from fertile land which was their birth right and resettled them in areas that were far away from all forms of transport and communication (Tshuma, 1997; Mafa, et. al. 2015). About 51 per cent of the land was set aside for European settlers (Tshuma, 1997; Rukuni, 2006; Vengeyi, 2015; Mafa, et. al.). Under the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 the right of Africans to land ownership was abrogated. Africans would only be allowed to purchase land in Native Purchase Areas (Tshuma, 1997; Chitiyo, 2000; Mafa, et. al. 2015). There was overcrowding in communal areas which resulted in population pressure and soil erosion. The colonial government quickly reacted to these problems by passing of

the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. This Act further imposed and enforced conservation measures on land which was collectively owned by indigenous people and as demonstrated in chapter two, this Act mainly policed female agricultural activities (Vudzijena, 1998; Moyo, 1996; Mafa, et. al. 2015).

After the Native Land Husbandry Act, the Smith government introduced the Land Tenure Act of 1969. The main aim of this Act was to entrench the division of land between the whites and Africans. With blacks being pushed to barren areas it meant that both men and women no longer enjoyed access to fertile lands as before. To make matters even worse, men now had small pieces of barren land; this consequently meant that both men and women had lost the privilege they previously enjoyed of collectively owning land through the other gender. Since there was no enough land for indigenous people, men no longer had enough land to share with women they only used the land as family land and could not allocate women small plots where they used to grow the female crops. Furthermore, chiefs could not easily allocate land to married men since the size of the land had greatly diminished and it was barren as well. Some of the selected fictional works for this study vividly demonstrate how the colonial settlers dispossessed African men and women of their prime land and moved them to barren areas. It is against this historical background that colonial penetration and its effects on gender and land ownership in selected fictional works is analysed.

5.4.1 Colonial Penetration and its Effects on Gender and Land Ownership in *Feso*

In *Feso* Mutswairo juxtaposes the tranquil society of the VaHota people under Chief Nyan'ombe with that of Pfumojena and the VaNyai people to demonstrate the early infiltration of colonial invaders who dispossessed Africans, both men women of their prime land which they formerly enjoyed. The title of the novel itself, *Feso*, which when literally translated means a double-pronged thorn is a reflection of the dilemma that Africans experienced due to land dispossession. It symbolises some discomfiture that the people of Afrian descent, both men and women suffered as result of land alienation. Black men and women could no longer freely move around their land since it had been taken away from them and was regarded as a no go area for them; if they were caught trespassing in white areas they would be prosecuted. Under such circumstances of dispossession of land, *Feso*, a double pronged thorn further represents the white people as a thorn in the flesh of black

people since they had deprived black people, both men and women of the land they formerly collectively owned. Dispossession of land was like a thorn in the flesh of black people, of both men and women who had been stripped of the land they formerly collectively owned. Nyan'ombe's harmonious and stable community is threatened by Pfumojena. The name Pfumojena which when literally translated means 'white spear' is used by Mutswairo to demonstrate how the white colonial masters caused a lot of suffering among the people of African descent. The white spear brings in a lot of suffering to people who live under servitude and oppressive leadership. Pfumojena kills those he disagrees with and expels from his land those nonconformists he cannot defeat. Mutswairo is alluding to harsh colonial leadership in which Africans suffered at the mercy of the colonial masters who evicted them from their ancestral land.

Pfumojena acquires wealth through unscrupulous means. After falsely accusing people of treason and witchcraft, he would kill those people and in turn take over their land. Pfumojena signifies the white people who violently expropriated black men and women's land. This is brought out where it is said;

Asi kuna vavo vainge vasina kuurayiwa vaichengetwa pamuzinda wamambo namakurukota ake savaranda vachimurimira nokumushandira nokumufudzira zvipfuwo. Zvose zvipfuwo zvavavo vainge vaurayiwa, kana kuti vava varanda wamambo, zvaikokorodzwa, zvova zvipfuwo zvamambo namakurukota ake pamwe neminda yavo. Naizvozvo izvi zvinokwanisa kukuratidzai upfumi, zvikuru hwemombe, hwaiva namambo Pfumojena (p. 19).

Feso akagara gore pamuzinda wamambo achimushandira zvikuru somuranda wake. Basa raakanga akamisirwa raive riri rokufudza mombe, matanga namatanga ezvipfuwo zvaipambwa namambo mushure mokunge auraya varidzi vazvo nokuvatorera nyika dzavo ...Vose vaive namashave okuda mukaka vaiunwa nokuudya kudzamara vabuda mashave, nokuti wakanga wakawanda semvura. Hari nehari dzawo dzaizadzwa mangwannani namauro ose (p.37)

(But there were those who were not killed, these were kept under guard at the chief's palace as servants working on his fields and herding his cattle. All the beasts belonging to those who were killed by the chief, and those who had been taken into servitude were taken by the chief and his advisors together with their fields, they were taken as well. As a result this amply shows the amount of cattle and wealth chief Pfumojena had.

Feso stayed for close to a year at the chief's palace working for the chief as a servant. His main job was that of herding cattle, several herds of cattle that were confiscated by the chief after killing their owners, and also consequently confiscating their land... All those who really craved milk had enough of it till they were fed up. Several

containers of milk were filled every morning and evening for the servants to drink if they so wished)

Pfumojena is a tyrannical ruler, and through him Mutswairo portrays how the white colonialists confiscated the black people's land, both men and women had been dispossessed. The chief's wealth just like Rhodes' colonial herd was acquired by dispossessing the black people. The famous destocking resulted in black people having a few herds of cattle per family whilst white people had unlimited access to the number of cattle herds they would keep. Palmer cited in Vengeyi (2015: 129) has also noted the destocking exercise that was carried out by the white colonial masters. He affirms that:

Also, under the provisions of many brutal European colonial laws, Africans were not allowed to own more than 5 cattle. Yet Africans considered cattle to be the equivalent of banks in the European sense. Some African families with 200 cattle had 195 taken away for little or no payment at all. Europeans on the other hand were allowed unlimited herds of cattle. In fact, Europeans built their herd through forcefully dispossessing Africans of their cattle. And all this was condoned by the European colonial apartheid laws.

This graphically demonstrates how the colonial invaders dispossessed black men and women of their cattle and land. The colonialists built their herd from scratch by confiscating African people's beasts and land. In a way they also instituted colonially induced poverty because their source of livelihood, the land and the basis of their wealth, the cattle had been taken away from them. The pre-colonial economy which relied heavily on land and cattle had been paralysed through settler dispossession. *Feso* therefore concisely presents how African men and women were dispossessed of their land and animals.

Through the people who are held in servitude by Pfumojena herding cattle and only allowed to drink the milk but not claiming ownership of the beasts that had been confiscated from them. Mutswairo portrays the effects of the colonial dispossession on the people of African descent, both men and women. These were clearly felt after the Land Apportionment and the Native Land Husbandry Acts. By allowing the servants to enjoy the milk but nothing else from the cattle, Mutswairo gives an analogy of what the colonial invaders did. After dispossessing the Ndebele people of their cattle, the colonial settlers forced the Ndebele people to herd the cattle that had been appropriated from them (Mtetwa, 2015). Muchemwa (2015: 52) has also observed the dispossession of Ndebele cattle by the pioneer settlers and

affirms that; “This meant that the Ndebele were left without a single cow of their own. The BSAC acquired dominion over all Ndebele cattle also confirmed that the 40 930 cattle redistributed back to the Ndebele people were purely for herding and safe keeping only.”

Furthermore, through chief Pfumojena who also gives some of the confiscated land to his advisors, Mutswairo demonstrates how the colonial settlers partitioned confiscated land amongst themselves. Pfumojena’s gesture of giving confiscated land to his advisors symbolises Rhodes’ gesture of giving the pioneer column pieces of land expropriated from black men and women as gifts, used to thank his pioneer team for a job well done in the colonial enterprise. Palmer cited in Mtetwa (2015: 144) has also observed the golden handshake given to members of the pioneer column. He affirms that “Each of the 196 pioneers was granted a free farm of 1 500 morgen (3 175 acres) and 15 reef claims of 400 by 150 feet.” Hence Mutswairo, through his land allegory, is able to distinctly present how land was confiscated from indigenous men and women by white settlers. His use of imagery and symbolism enables him to achieve such a difficult task in colonial times where land issues were considered subversive and too political to be discussed.

Mutswairo through Pfumojena, the tyrannical ruler, brings to the fore the effects of the colonial legislations that the black men and women were now experiencing in the 1950s. He intelligently portrays both land and cattle dispossession in *Feso* through Pfumojena’s despotic activities. Pfumojena just like the colonial regime built his herd from his subjects’ herd, he initially had nothing but managed to build a very big herd through expropriating from those whom he had falsely accused, killed or taken into servitude. Mutswairo managed to bring out these political land issues in his novel through his land allegory because the Rhodesia Literature Bureau never published anything that was believed to be politically subversive (Chiwome, 1996). Mutswairo himself in an interview with Veit-Wild (1992) avers that the first chapter of the novel which had very clear political overtures for it directly dealt with land dispossession was removed by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. What remained was the allegory of Pfumojena and Nyan’ombe which the colonial regime represented by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau failed to recognise dealt with colonial dispossession of land (Veit-Wild, 1992). Mutswairo can therefore be applauded as a responsible writer who

exposes critical issues that affect his people. He is a committed writer who discusses the sensitive issues of his community (Achebe, 1975).

Through Chipochedenga (meaning heavenly endowed gift) Mutswairo also depicts how the white people took away the land from Africans. Chipochedenga, the daughter of Pfumojena signifies the land which had been taken away from the black people. Pfumojena either killed or maimed people who showed interest in his daughter Chipochedenga (p. 18). In the same vein Pfumojena, who represented white colonialists, detested anyone who wanted to marry his daughter; people could only admire her. In the same way the white settlers resented any idea of black men and women reclaiming the lost land but only wanted the dispossessed to admire the land that white people had expropriated from them without reclaiming ownership of that land. Through the use of metaphors, Mutswairo evaded the overt scrutiny of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau authorities and exposes the activities of the colonial system in the novel, *Feso*. Both men and women had been dispossessed of the land they formerly enjoyed and communally owned in the pre-colonial period.

The fact that publishers were not free to publish material that was assumed dissident by the government of the day also came out in an interview with one of the publishers. They stated that writers and publishers engaged in self-censorship if they wanted their works to be published. One of the publishers when responding to the question if they as a publishing company had been satisfied with what they had published concerning land ownership answered:

No this is a political issue, it is not safe; we usually accept publications of what the government of the day wants to know...Yes some writers do call a spade a spade but when it comes to land they leave out a lot of issues maybe because of the political nature of the topic.

Accordingly some publishers as well as authors were unwilling to write directly on land ownership. This explains why authors like Mutswairo who wrote about the land dispossession issue during the colonial period had to use an allegory which could easily escape political scrutiny. Additionally, those who vividly discuss land issues like Mutasa (2005), Moyo (1985) and Choto (1990) only do so after independence.

Through the poem “Nehanda Nyakasikana” (p.35), Mutswairo narrates the injustices perpetrated against the African people by the colonial white settlers. Mutswairo invokes the spirit of a woman to come and assist in the problems that black men and women are facing due to land dispossession. Through Nehanda Mutswairo graphically paints a picture that repossession of land is not a preserve of the male gender, even women are actively involved in this exercise. As a result of the poem “Nehanda Nyakasikana,” Mutswairo vividly portrays black people, both men and women who have been dispossessed of their land and ask for help from the spirit world. By virtue of the poem African people’s grievances are laid bare, “*Venhaka dzedu, nhasi vokura vakasunzumara. Munyika yavo; voshaya nzvimbo dzokurarama...Pfuma yenyika nhasi yakatorwa. Vakagovana paukama hwavo vepfumojena. Nhasi vari kudya mafuta ayo nyika isu tichidya nhoko dzezvironda* (p. 35). (Those of our African cultural heritage cannot enjoy anymore. In their land of birth they have no land to eke out a living. The wealth of our nation has been expropriated and shared among those who rule by the sword. Today they are enjoying the fruits of our country while we suffer and languish in poverty). By use of this poem, Mutswairo amply uses the African people’s voice of resistance to land alienation. He laments that indigenous African men and women have been dispossessed of their land as a result of colonial legislations like the Matabeleland Order of Council Act of 1894, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 whose drastic effects were felt in the 1950s when the Africans were beginning to form nationalist parties to resist white settler occupation and dispossession of land.

Through the poem “Nehanda Nyakasikana” Mutswairo conscientises indigenous men and women of the evils of colonialist legislations stated earlier on; laws that have dispossessed people of their land and livestock. Mutswairo further portrays that the wealth of the nation, which gives them dignity and some form of livelihood, has been taken away by the colonial settlers who shared the land amongst themselves. He affirms that the expropriation of the African people’s land transformed indigenous men and women overnight into slaves, squatters and landless people. Both men and women have been dispossessed of their land; every African irrespective of gender has been stripped of the land they formerly enjoyed before colonialism. This has been supported by historical evidence that the colonial settlers deprived Africans of their prime land and shared it amongst themselves (Magosvongwe, 2013, 2015; Mafa, et. al. 2015; Vengeyi, 2015; Mtetwa, 2015).

Through the same poem Mutswairo effectively depicts that the colonial legislations were part of the colonial stratagem to conscript free African labour into colonial establishments like mines and farms. This is brought out where the persona in the poem says, “*Nhasi vagere murusununguko, Isu todzipwa huro namajoto...Harahwa dzedu dzobatwa sepwere munyika yawakavapa, Musiki wengoni! Havasisina rukudzo panyika*” (p. 35) (Today they live comfortably in freedom while we live in servitude under yoke...Our elderly people are treated like children in a country that you gave them the Merciful creator! They no longer have respect on this land). Mutswairo vividly portrays that African people, both men and women now live in servitude in the land of their birth. They no longer have freedom while the white settlers are enjoying on expropriated or stolen land. As they work on the colonial farms these elderly people are called by their first names by the young colonial masters as a way of diminishing their pride and dignity; they will perpetually be boys whilst colonial masters (even when they are young) are the perennial bosses, superior to the black people. Also black people are conscripted to work on the farms and mines and hence are like slaves in their land of birth. Vengeyi (2015) has observed that Africans were conscripted to work for Europeans on the farms and mines for free, under *chibharo*, forced unpaid labour (Vengeyi, 2015). Through this poem Mutswairo has managed to effectively depict the negative consequences of colonial land deprivation on African men and women.

In the poem Mustwairo also invokes the spirit of Nehanda to deliver the African people from white colonial oppression. He pleads to Nehanda the legendary female figure whose spirit inspired Africans to fight against white settlers in the first Chimurenga war of dispossession of 1896-1897. Nehanda signified the epitome of resistance against colonial oppression when her spirit medium was hanged in 1898 by the settlers for revolting against the settler servitude and colonialist activities. The persona in the poem appeals to Nehanda, “*O Nehanda Nyakasikana! Kunozove riniko, Isu Vanyai tichitambudzika? Mweya unoera! Kunozove riniko isu VaNyai tichidzvinyirirwa...Nehanda Nyakasikana! Kunozova riniko Isu Vanyai Tichitambudzika? Mhondoro tsvene! Kunozove riniko isu VaNyai tichidvinyirirwa. Neriri Pfumojena rasvika munyika?*” (pp. 35-36). (Nehanda Nyakasikana how long will it take while we the VaNyai people are suffering? Sacred spirit how long will it take while the VaNyai are under oppression? Being oppressed by this white spear which has come into our land). The persona in the poem invokes images of land, hunger, persecution and yearning for freedom and therefore asks the spirit of Nehanda to come and rescue the VaNyai who are suffering

under Pfumojena. The rhetorical questions that the persona asks demonstrate an intense degree of suffering of indigenous men and women under the colonial masters. The poem alludes to lack of freedom in the form of the numerous taxes that Africans were supposed to pay to the colonial masters. Phimister (cited in Vengeyi, 2015: 129) asserts that “failure to satisfy these tax obligations would lead to confiscation of cattle, loss of land and imprisonment.” Mutswairo through this poem and invoking the spirit of Nehanda is able to distinctly present the suffering that Africans endured under colonial legislations and the numerous taxes that deprived blacks of the freedom they formerly enjoyed before colonialism. Mutswairo is able to demonstrate the suffering that black men and women endured under the colonial masters in the 1950s.

Mutswairo alludes to Nehanda in the poem, “who is an inspiration and a symbol of resistance against imperialist oppression and the impact is to animate a patriotic culture that rejuvenates the people’s fighting spirit and encourages them to repulse imperialism in order to salvage the conditions of their lives” (Mandova & Wasosa, 2012: 1942). Mutswairo understands that the struggle for repossession of land should be understood within the spiritual realm and thus he summons the spirit of Nehanda to come and assist the suffering and dispossessed African men and women. Chitando (2015: 37) argues that “Nehanda signifies the ancestral realm and its commitment to the health and wellbeing of indigenous Zimbabweans.” Mutswairo therefore appeals to Nehanda to give the indigenous Zimbabweans, men and women alike, their land on which they can live dignified lives and earn a source of livelihood. In this regard “Mutswairo presents land as a common property and source of wealth from which Africans, men and women derive their source of livelihood which is inspired by the spirit world” (Shoko, 2015). This demonstrates that people of African descent are closely linked to the spirit world and can only overcome the challenges that they face by invoking the assistance of the spirit world. Even the freedom fighters were also guided and assisted by the spirit world in their struggle to regain the dispossessed land.

Appealing to Nehanda gives *Feso* a patriotic vision in which the Zimbabweans believe in the assistance of their ancestors to deliver them from white colonial oppression. It is only after the spirit world has intervened in the affairs of the living that they can easily get back their land, on their own they cannot achieve this enormous task. Mutswairo’s novel, therefore

contextualises Zimbabwe's liberation struggle in its correct historical perspective of regaining back the dispossessed land. The predicament of the dispossessed African people that Mutswairo alludes to justifies the need for African men and women to engage in the liberation struggle to regain their dispossessed land with the help of the divine purview represented by Nehanda.

Mutswairo also recreates characters like Mapondera who are significant in Zimbabwean history. Mapondera is presented as a great warrior and advisor to Chief Nyan'ombe and is willing to fight Pfumojena on behalf of his chief (p.74). Equally in his other novel *Mapondera Soldier of Zimbabwe* (1978) Mutswairo invokes important historical figures in redressing the colonial imbalances in land ownership. He celebrates the spirit of Mapondera in fighting against Cecil John Rhodes and the Portuguese who had expropriated the Zimbabwean people's land. Mandova and Wasosa (2012: 1943) have also noted this allusion to people of great historical significance like Mapondera and state that "this elevates the patriotic culture and inspires the Shona people to combat European settlers' oppressive system in the same way Mapondera's message impacted on Chief Nyan'ombe's subjects." Mutswairo therefore does not portray Africans as passive people but as a combative people who strive to change the destiny of their lives. Zimbabweans are presented as people who are willing to die for their land; they could do whatever is necessary in order to get back their dispossessed land. This is an Afro-centred vision where Africans do not suffer in silence but pragmatically get involved to change their welfare. Through Mapondera, the indigenous people are depicted as a revolutionary lot, who are willing to chart a new destiny for their lives by regaining back their lost land.

Furthermore, to show that Zimbabweans can do something about their dispossession of land, Mutswairo presents the dissidents who live in the forests who have been expelled by Pfumojena. These persecuted VaNyai people unite with Nya'ombe's soldiers and attack Pfumojena. The forest therefore, according to Vambe (2006: 267) "turns into a space of political resistance to Pfumojena...The armed struggle by dissidents opposed to Pfumojena is born, bred and executed in the forest space that is considered to be the margin." According to Vambe (2005: 267) "these dissidents who live in the forest are a premonition of the mass exodus of freedom fighters who sought training to depose the Smith regime that had deprived

them of their land several years later.” Thus Mutswairo in *Feso* demonstrates that literature is largely a creation of social experiences, “it does not grow or develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society (wa Thiong’o, 1972: xv). *Feso* therefore is shaped by the socio-political situation of the day.

5.4.1.1 A Critique of Mutswairo’s Social Vision in *Feso*

Mutswairo is applauded as a shrewd author, for being able to conceal the land dispossession in his allegory *Feso* and having the novel successfully published. The novel inspired many nationalists in the 1950s, and also of critical significance is the poem “Nehanda Nyakasikana” (pp.35-36) which some of the nationalists recited to gain inspiration to fight the colonial regime and regain their lost land. The late vice president, Dr Simon Vengeyi Muzenda was once jailed for reciting that poem. Later on, the colonial masters realised that the novel was a political protest and later banned it. It was only reprinted and found its way into schools and institutions of higher learning after independence. Vambe has also noted the strength of *Feso* as an anti-colonialist protest novel that fought land dispossession and states that:

Similarly, in the 1950s white settlers feared the allegorical potency of *Feso*. They banned the novel from use in African secondary schools because militant black nationalists appropriated its subversive poem on Nehanda and recited it at public political meetings to stage oppositional politics (Vambe, 2006: 267).

The novel inspired most nationalists to fight against colonialism and demonstrated the ability by black people, men and women included to regain their voice over their lost lands. The defeat of Pfumojena demonstrates that the black people were able to fight colonial oppression and regain their lost land.

Mutswairo took the bold step to write about a highly political issue of land which was viewed as subversive by the colonial government of the day. Writers and publishers during the colonial period had censorship deeply entrenched into their system such that on their own they practised self-censorship before the Literature Bureau even looked at their manuscripts. The desire to evade potential incarceration and imprisonments forced such writers to look for alternative means and strategies of having their voices heard in spite of the adverse

environment. Thus Mutswairo has to be applauded for the tact he employs in his style of writing resulting in the inspirational writing on land dispossession in the 1950s. One of the respondents also highlighted this when responding to the question: Were the authors bold enough in dealing with land issues? The respondent had this to say:

I would say they tried their best under the circumstances. An author's social vision is often shaped by their political sympathies and the land question in Zimbabwe is a highly politicised issue. So boldness may become a highly compromised thing. The land question is a very sensitive issue, especially at the time of colonialism and post-independence, during its redistribution. It needed courage to write on that theme, so those who did took a bold step (Field Notes, January 2016).

Mutswairo can therefore be applauded for writing about the dispossession of land in the 1950s when the white colonial government was in charge and would never tolerate such subversive literature.

Similarly, Chiwome (1996) and Kahari (1986, 1990) have also discussed Mutswairo's boldness in discoursing land issues that were concealed in the allegorical nature of *Feso*. Both Chiwome and Kahari make reference to the abundance of food and forestry resources Mazowe as depicted in *Feso* but have not discussed gender and land ownership in that particular novel which is the thrust of this study.

Through *Feso*, Mutswairo successfully portrays Africans as people who can chart their own destiny through agency and not inertia. The novel demonstrates the relevance of African-centred approaches of Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity in resolving racial, gender and historical imbalances in land ownership in Zimbabwe. Mutswairo has managed to successfully demonstrate the colonial dispossession of land and went further through his allegorical novel to demonstrate that Zimbabweans could regain their dispossessed land if they invoked the spirit world in their nationalist and equitable gender redistribution of land. The fact that Mutswairo invokes the spirit of Nehanda, a female figure demonstrates that women had a very significant role to play in land issues in the history of Zimbabwe.

5.4.2 The Colonial Farm and its Effects on Gender and Land Ownership in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe*

Patrick Chakaipa's novel *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* (1967) is an epitome of dispossession of land of the African people. Both men and women in the novel no longer have access to fertile land which they formerly enjoyed. The novel depicts how colonialism and its concomitant agents of Christianity, urbanisation and presumed modernity have availed new methods of accessing land in the colony (Biri, 2015: 165). *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* which when literally translated means that the beer pots have been washed while the children walk naked signifies how the dispossessed men and women now spent all their merger resources on alcohol at the expense of their families during the colonial period. Unlike the pre-colonial period in which men and women collectively owned land in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* the land has been taken away and is privately owned by the white farmer. The novel signifies the western form of ownership which is foreign to Africa and has alienated land from both black men and women. It highlights how colonial legislations have stripped indigenous men and women of the land they previously collectively owned. The new form of ownership emphasises private property ownership at the expense of collectivism or communal ownership.

Through colonial legislations like the Matabeleland Order of Council, Land Apportionment Act and the Native Husbandry Land Act which entrenched the division of land between European and African Land, land became a European possession and private property. The Land Apportionment and the Native Land Husbandry Acts described indigenous people as "natives." The term native is derogatory for it subtracts some rights and privileges from the indigenous people including the right to land. This is brought out by Muchemwa (2015) who evidently quotes what the colonial settlers meant by the term native when he says:

When we Europeans, call people natives, we take away from them anything that suggests that they are human beings. They are, to us, like the forest which the western man fells down, or, the big game that he shoots down. THEY HAVE NO TENURE OF LAND. Their tenure of land is as precarious as that of the animals that they find. What shall we, the lords of creation, the white people, do with the natives we find? (Muchemwa, 2015: 115)

Muchemwa pertinently captures that white settlers' perception of the indigenous people as objects who could be acted upon and be easily exploited through land expropriation. This explains why the settlers took away the indigenous people's land and forced them into

slavery, providing free forced labour to the colonial settlers because they viewed indigenous people as a resource that could easily be exploited. In *Dzaskwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* both men and women have been dispossessed of their land and have been dumped into colonial native reserves or find themselves eking out a living on the colonial farm represented by Vhuka's farm.

The colonial legislations therefore gave prime land to white settlers which they then developed into farms which symbolised the epitome of colonial dispossession. Just like Mutswairo in *Feso* who uses an allegory to discuss land issues, Chakaipa in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* uses a social critique of alcoholism to portray the colonial dispossession of land from black men and women. Even though the novel's plot appears on the surface to be on alcoholism, on the deep structure it presents how blacks both men and women were forcibly removed from the fertile areas they formerly occupied. Chakaipa uses a social satire of alcoholism because of the stringent censorship laws of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau which disallowed anything that was politically subversive to the establishment. One respondent maintains that, "*Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* just like other Zimbabwean Shona fiction has continued in the mould that was set by the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau (SRLB)" (Field Notes, January 2016). Another respondent, a reader of Shona fiction concurs with this and states that:

Shona Literature has not been blunt on gender and land issues. Firstly it is because among the Shona people men and women did not compete for land ownership. Women accessed land through their fathers or husbands. And secondly; because the issue of land is purely political, hence Shona writers have not been very blunt and vivid in presenting the issue as it unfolds in reality (Field Notes, February 2016)

This therefore explains why Chakaipa discreetly presents his novel as one on land and colonialism. Surface reading of the novel reveals how alcoholism has destroyed African families. However, a critical expose of the book depicts the effects of the colonial legislations on land dispossession. Authors of Shona fiction had to practice self-censorship if they wanted their works to be published therefore the use of a social critique of alcoholism by Chakaipa.

Another respondent also notes the general lack of boldness in colonial novels like *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* in presenting the dispossession of land. She states that:

With novels of the colonial period like *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* the authors were not bold enough, they just chronicled that whites had large tracts of fertile land, farms, without stating why men and women of the black race resorted to beer drinking and beer selling. Colonial fiction like *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* does not highlight the historical factors that have resulted in beer drinking but makes that to appear natural. The novel also makes it appear normal for whites to own large tracts of land while black families do not have. Generally blacks did not have productive land as compared to whites but the reasons are not given. So the writers justify black poverty (Field Notes, March, 2016).

To quickly condemn Chakaipa as an author who portrayed white ownership of land as normal would be doing gross injustice considering the time the novel was published. The author had to be wary in his dealing with the subject of dispossession of land, any other bold way would have risked his work being labelled subversive and facing possible ban. The only way for him to have his novel published during the colonial period was to conceal his story of land dispossession under a social critique of alcoholism which appeared to have resulted in the breakdown of the African family.

Chakaipa depicts the farm as a microcosm of the larger Rhodesian colony in his novel *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe*. He uses it as a metaphor for the colonisation and domination of the whole country. The dispossession of African fertile land into the hands of white colonial settlers at the expense of African men and women is neatly captured where Kufahakurambwe cycles from his new home area in the reserves to Vhuka's farm where he now works:

Ava mangwana Kufahakurambwe akati pepu akaona inga ava marambakwedza munhu ndokupfeka. Akatora bhasikoro rake rakanga riri muberere onanga kubasa. Akati mhanyei-mhanyei, akabva asvika muchitondo, akati naro bhasikoro, pawaya vhu-u, achipfuka, mupurazi yomurungu wake tumbe. Akangoti naro gan'a, murume dikita rongoti teu. Kuzoti ava pakati pebani iri akamira achiti ature mafemo. Akatarisa kwaakanga abva nako, achida kuona kuti zuva rava kubuda here asi hapana chaakaona nokuda kwouswa hwuno hwurefu hwaienda mudenga umo, hwaivhutirwa nevhu dema rakanga rakati ndoo kusviba sechidziro. Akatarisa kuchamhembe, kwaiva nohwuno hupfupi hwaivaira sohwakamwayiwa munyu. Haizenge mombe yakanga irimo. Zhinji dzakanga dzati zvadzo rakata dzichizeya; dzine chitsama ndidzo dzakange dzichifura (p. 3).

(On the following morning Kufahakurambwe woke up and noticed that it was almost dawn and started dressing up. He took his bicycle which was put on the outer walls of the house and cycled to work. After cycling for some time he got to a bushy area and then reached the fence that demarcated his white

master's farm from the nearby reserve and crossed over it. He then cycled over the vast land; he sweated because it was some distance which needed more energy. He cast his eyes where he had come from in order to check if the sun had risen but he could not see anything due to the healthy tall grass that covered the land which was well fed by the rich black soils. He looked on the northern side and saw the short grass that tasted good for the cattle as if salt had been added to it. There were lots of cattle. Most of them were resting, chewing the curd and just a few were grazing.)

The novel exposes the effects of the colonial legislations which condemned black people, both men and women to barren areas and white people to fertile areas. Black soils symbolise fertile areas that are well fed and allow crops to grow well. This is why Kufahakurambwe failed to see the rising sun because the area that Vhuka's farm was located on had rich soils which enabled the tall grass to grow. Also the area had adequate grazing areas that could cater for the herd of cattle that grazed there. Thus both men and women are suffering under the harsh effects of colonialism which has stripped them of their fertile land.

Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe clearly depicts the process of discrimination along distribution of land lines. This involved a methodical exclusion of indigenous men and women from fruitful areas to those unsuitable for human habitation. Mugari (2015: 65) has also noted this methodical exclusion of blacks from fertile areas and affirms that:

The process of land segregation involved a drawn out process of systematic removal of Africans off agriculturally productive land to areas of marginal agricultural potential- native reserves, later known as Tribal Trust Lands...Whites lived in fenced-off European farms and towns while indigenous people were herded into areas of least agricultural potential called native reserves.

Blacks were therefore systematically moved to barren areas which were characterised by sandy soils and arid conditions. The indigenous people's new place of abode signified by Kufahurambwe's native reserve in the novel were unproductive areas, the so called Tribal Trust Lands which had no agricultural potential while Europeans, symbolised by Vhuka's plush surroundings. The fact that Vhuka's farm is fenced denotes that it is now privately owned land that excludes black men and women but is now owned by a white male farmer. The physical demarcation also outlaws indigenous men and women that are deemed trespassers on the white man's privately owned land. Contravening trespassing laws into the so-called privately owned land calls for prosecution. This also affects freedom of movement as black men and women can no longer freely move on the land as before. With this new

dispensation of private property ownership, “the white man has expropriated public space and inheritance for the individual, altering the communal custodianship to land practiced before and in the process, he robbed the majority of an identity and self-definition which came with belonging to land” (Chidora & Mandizvidza, 2015: 344). The private property and individual ownership of land greatly distorted the communal land ownership that prevailed in pre-colonial African society. This private ownership stripped both men and women of the rights they formerly enjoyed on the land.

Consequently, any Africans who were found to occupy what was designated white land by the colonial legislations of the Matabeleland Order of Council of 1894, The Land Apportionment Act of 1930, The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and the Land Tenure Act of 1969 were declared squatters and were liable for eviction from the designated white areas. Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart (2013:13) have also observed this methodical dispossession of the black people from the fertile areas and assert that: “An African whose home happened to be situated in an area which had been designated European was called a squatter.” Consequently, the fenced-off area symbolised by Vhuka’s fenced-off farm was a no go area for black men and women. Part of the area lies fallow and the white “owners are frenzied or vicious when they see someone walking through these unspoiled forests that are their farms” (Hove, 1990: 81). It was only those blacks who provided cheap labour on the farm who were allowed there and once their services were no longer needed, they were expelled from the farm as what happens to Kufahakurambwe. Vhuka says to Kufahakurambwe, “*Kufahakurambwe, ndinofunga zvandataura wazvinzwa. Handichadi kukukona pano papurazi pangu, mose nemukadzi wako*” (p.44) (Kufahakurambwe, I am sure you have heard what I have said. I no longer want to see you and your wife on my farm). Vhuka claims legal occupation to the designated white area by colonial legislations and through the power which is vested in him by the colonial enterprise, expels those black people whose services are no longer required on the farm. What is ironic is that the previous black men and women who identified themselves as the original owners of the land are now expelled by a newcomer whose occupancy is deemed illegal from the perspective of the indigenous people. Blacks are alienated by colonial legislations thereby depriving both men and women of the rich fertile lands they formerly owned before the colonial establishment.

The fact that the designated European areas were no go areas for black men and women explains why chief Rekayi Tangwena and his people were forced to move from Gaeresi ranch to Bende native reserve because their ancestral homes in the Nyanga highlands of Zimbabwe had fallen into designated European areas (Mafa, et.al. 2015; Mugari, 2015). The Tangwena people were deemed a perennial nuisance for attempting to reclaim their birthright- the Gaerezi ranch. The colonial government used brutal force to evict the Tangwena people from their ancestral land. Their huts were pulled down and burnt, and men, women and children were insensitively beaten. This is because the Tangwena people continually reclaimed their fertile lands that had been designated European areas thereby earning the label ‘squatters’. The Tangwena incident remarkably explains how the colonial settlers dispossessed Africans of their land which they formerly occupied. The same incident also dispels the myth that white settlers occupied vacant land; but they took over land which was occupied and collectively owned by indigenous men and women which was fertile and in the process forcibly evicted the original land owners to dry areas that were unfit for any agricultural production.

In the same passage where Kufahakurambwe cycles across the immense tract of land on Vhuka’s farm which he struggles to cover, Chakaipa’s illustration is evidence that the white man (Vhuka) owned large tracts of land. Kufahakurambwe fails to cover the distance across the farm even when cycling because the male white owner who has taken over the land and now privately owns it. The colonial master has taken a large chunk of the indigenous men and women’s land. There are also some fictional writers like Chenjerai Hove in his novel *Bones* (1990) who depict that settler male farmers owned large tracts of land in the form of farms. Manyepo the white farmer in Hove’s *Bones* possesses such “fields that stretch forever as if they were the sky” (Hove, 1990: 35). Stretching like the sky here signifies that Manyepo representing settler farmers owned large tracts of land. Furthermore, Janifa one of the farm workers laments how “Even the water here does not belong to me. It belongs to Manyepo. The air here belongs to Manyepo. Nothing belongs to the farm workers” (Hove, 1990: 120). By stressing that the white farmer owns everything on the land, Hove paints a gloomy picture of the dispossession of black men and women who have been deprived of their land and now own nothing. Both Hove and Chakaipa through their novels set on a colonial farm depict the effects of the colonial legislations in the dispossession of black men and women of their prime land.

In the same way the dispossession of black men and women's land and forcibly condemning them to barren areas is also brought out in Charles Mungoshi's *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva* (1975). The novel lucidly depicts how colonial legislations have usurped black people's land ownership rights. Colonialism has created native reserves where Rex's wife, Rindai and her in-laws VaMbambai and his wife VaKwiripi have been pushed onto barren land (Vambe, 2005). What is grown by Rindai on the barren land is to supplement the meager wages that her husband Rex earns who now works in the city. The colonial set up has actually changed the gender roles. Women like Rindai now look after the family while husbands like Rex live and work in town. Rex has been forced into the colonial establishment of cities to earn money which is needed to pay the numerous taxes that were introduced by the settlers.

However, Rex's low wages are insufficient for basic amenities hence it had to be supplemented by Rindai who has embraced the peasant option (Ranger, 1965: 65). Colonialism has usurped gender roles in a colonial context with women like Rindai fully fending for the family. Also their barren land in the reserve is managed by Rindai and not her husband Rex who now lives in the urban area. One respondent captures this colonial usurpation of gender roles in a colonial context when he said:

Other novels like Mungoshi's *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuvahave* characters like Rindai having a maize field that she has planted when her husband Rex visits his rural home he enjoys the labour of his wife. Although it is not explicitly stated, Shona tradition gives a field to cultivate to the male who is the husband and not to the wife (Field Notes, May 2016).

In this context peasants in the reserves represented by Rindai "grow crops to subsidise the capitalist market as well as seizing and enlarging economic opportunity to control and direct a portion of a capitalist market in a colonial context" (Vambe, 2005: 223). Schmidt (1992: 7) has also noted how women shouldered the bulk of the burden in peasant farming and state that "Shona women, as the primary agricultural producers, played a dominant role in peasant response to market opportunities." She further highlights how women in the rural areas subsidised the capitalist economy by providing unpaid care work to run the capitalist dispensation and avers that: "Women of course formed the backbone of this unremunerated labour force" (Schmidt, 1992: 5). Thus both men and women in a colonial context have been dispossessed of the fertile land they formerly enjoyed and have been pushed on to native

reserves, with men being forced to move into urban areas where they sell their labour to the highest bidder, while women struggle to earn a living on the barren land as represented by Rindai.

Chakaipa in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* also neatly captures how dispossession of land by colonial settlers has also resulted in deprivation of the black men and women's cattle. The colonial settlers ended up with a large herd of cattle which they built from the indigenous herd, and such ownership is tantamount to looting. On Vhuka's farm there are a lot of cattle which Kufahakurambwe observes grazing on the farm. Colonial settlers grew their herd yet black people, the original owners of the grazing land were not allowed to have not more than 5 beasts, thus blacks were forced to sell their cattle in some cases to the white man at very low prices (Mtetwa, 2015). Paurosi brings out this fact about blacks when he says to Mavis, "*Hazvina mhosva kana ndikasara ndisina chokupfeka. Ndanga ndichida kuti ndivatengere dzimwe mombe asi hazvigoneki nokuti vanhu havabvumirwi kuita mombe dzakanyanya kuwanda nokuti dzinopedza ufuro*" (pp. 108-109). (I would not have minded remaining without any money to buy clothes for myself. I really wanted to buy some more cattle for my parents but this is impossible because blacks are not permitted to own many head of cattle due to shortage of grazing areas). Ironically Vhuka has many cattle which have enough grazing land compared to the few more Paurosi would have bought for his parents. Oppressive colonial laws are apparent here which demonstrates the lack of parity regarding land ownership amongst blacks and their source of wealth, the cattle. Through colonial legislations, Africans have been impoverished in the native reserves; they neither own fertile land nor cattle that they used to pride over as a source of wealth. Apart from being infertile the native reserves are so congested such that they are unable to cater for people and their livestock. To curb this, the colonial legislators had to limit the number of cattle that the indigenous people Africans owned.

Furthermore, to make sure that the colonial settlers kept the number of livestock owned by Africans within the restricted numbers, Chakaipa portrays the dip tank as a measure for keeping in check the growing number of indigenous herds in the reserves. The few cattle that had remained had to be dipped weakly at the local dip tank. Greddes says to Mavis, "*Ndiri kutsvaga mombe nokuti mangwana kune dhibhi*" (p.111) (Am looking for cattle because

tomorrow the cattle should be dipped). Greddes dreads going home to meet her uncle without the cattle because she knows the consequences of not dipping the cattle. Dipping the few cattle in possession of the Africans was not in the interest of the black farmers but was also a way of protecting the white farmer's large herd from transmittable pests such as ticks and other livestock diseases like foot and mouth.

Chakaipa in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* amply demonstrates what happens at a colonial farm. He depicts the farm as a miniature colony; it is a representative of the injustices that the indigenous black men and women who have been dispossessed of their land experienced in the colony. Chirere (2004) cited in Magosvongwe (2013) has also observed the position of the farm as a miniature colonial state; he professes that "often the farm is a salient and subtle miniature colonial state...the farmhouse is the seat of that miniature colonial state..." Thus the farm owner governs his farm with some brutality which typifies the brutal colonial governance over the colonised black people. The black farm workers on Vhuka's farm are regularly beaten by the farm owner, the white farmer uses violence to subdue his subjects. Vhuka beats up the foreman when he fails to report for duty whilst involved in beer drinking in his home area which is now a native reserve (p. 30). The foreman, Kufahakurambwe fights back the white man because he has been driven beyond reasonable limits in terms of a battered ego in front of women and children. It was the worst form of dehumanisation and loss of dignity to beat up a married man in front of women and children. This is the type of violence that is experienced on the farm.

Dispossession of black people's land has resulted in blacks living on the farms at the mercy of the white man; they are subjected to physical violence. Vhuka does mete out punishment on the foremen for lying (why he had not turned up for duty) but it appears it was his habit of subjecting people on the farm to physical violence. Farmers normally used the *sjambok* to exert physical torture on their labourers. This is brought out where one of the women who work on the farm says to the foreman "*Rambai muchitirevera kumurungu kuti dzimwe nguva arege kupota achirova vanhu*" (p. 14). (Continue to plead on our behalf to the white man so that he stops beating people). To which Kufahakurambwe responds, "*Handiti vanhu vanorohwa pamusana poumambara? Unofunga kuti murungu akati ita zvakati, iwe woti murungu zvaaenda ndoswera zvangu ndakati kabu kuvata- kana ouya unoti anokutambisa,*

anokusiya mauya?” (p. 14). (Is it not true that people are beaten because of their misdemeanor? You think you can go scot free if the white man asks you to do something and after he has gone you remain sleeping without doing what you have been asked to do? When he comes back he will surely beat you up). The woman’s message that Vhuka subjects people to physical violence typifies the lack of freedom on the farm; people are beaten as if they were beasts of burden. Kufahaurambwe’s response justifies Vhuka’s use of physical punishment for the workers on the farm. Chakaipa had to give this justification to make his novel pass through the censorship board; it would appear as if he had sympathies with the colonial establishment. If he had depicted whites as people who unjustifiably subject blacks to physical violence on the farms, his book might not have been published. Literature that portrayed the white man in bad light was not published by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. Chiwome (1996) confirms this; that any literature that was considered subversive was vetoed.

Therefore to make sure that his novel got published Chakaipa had to demonstrate that blacks on the colonial farms suffered a lot of physical violence because of their own shortcomings. This violence is symbolised by Kufahakurambwe’s beating and the general beatings that take place on the farm. However, if people are exposed to excessive violence they usually retaliate; this explains why Kufahakurambwe had to fight back the white man. This also typifies how the black people in colonial Rhodesia eventually took up arms to fight for their land because they had experienced a lot of physical and psychological violence. Africans did not continue to be passive recipients of the violence inflicted on them by the white man but had to exercise some form of agency and do something about it. This is what Afrocentricity and Africana Womanism theories encourage, that Africans should chart their own destiny and not to be passive when wrong things are being exerted on them.

The women on Vhuka’s farm confront Kufahakurambwe to tell the white man not to beat them up. This demonstrates that they too could not continue taking the violence that was being perpetrated on them lying low. They sent the foreman to tell the white man that what he is doing to them is unacceptable. Women like Mrs. Chikomba are very vocal and do not just take every order that is passed on to them. At one time they had to abandon harvesting tobacco and the white man comes to perused them to work. Hence both men and women at Vhuka’s farm no longer want to continue accepting unacceptable behaviour on the farm.

The physical violence experienced on the colonial farm in Rhodesia is clearly brought out in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950). Lessing having grown up on a farm in colonial Rhodesia had the advantage of direct experience when she wrote on colonialism and its effect on gender, race and identity. Her novel was published outside the country and therefore escaped the censorship of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. In Lessing's novel, blacks who have been dispossessed of their land and now work on the farm are subjected to brutal beatings with a *sjambok*, which was a whip made from cattle or hippo hide (Vengeyi, 2015). The magnitude of brutality and deprivation on the farm is shown by the power of the *sjambok*. The *sjambok* signifies mandatory physical and psychological violence that perpetuates colonial power over the black subjects.

In *The Grass is Singing*, a farmer by the name of Charlie Slatter believed in farming with the *sjambok*. Lessing had this to say about him, "But Charlie Slatter believed in farming with a *sjambok*. It hung over his front door, like a motto on a wall: 'You shall not mind killing if it is necessary.' He had once killed a native in a fit of temper. He was fined 30 pounds" (Lessing, 1950: 15). Slatter consistently advised other settlers to get a *sjambok* if they wanted to practice successful farming with the native farm labourers. It is said he advised Dick Turner when Dick started farming, "that one should buy a *sjambok* before a plough or a harrow..." (Lessing, 1950: 16). Slatter's position represents settler farmers' belief across the colony who disregarded Africans as human beings. Even Mary Turner, Dick Turner's wife beats up one of the natives with a *sjambok*, "...It gave her a feeling of authority, and braced her against the waves of hatred that she could feel coming from the gang of natives" (Lessing, 1950: 136). Mary frequently beats up farm workers whenever she takes charge of the farm during her husband's absence. "Involuntarily she lifted her whip and brought it down across his face in a vicious swinging blow...as she looked from it a drop of bright blood gathered and trickled down and off his chin, and splashed to his chest" (Lessing, 1950: 146-147). Mary Turner beats up the natives based on the belief that they are a lazy lot; she therefore does not want them to rest. One minute of rest was enough. Unbeknown to her, her husband usually gave his native labourers five- minute rest intervals (p. 137). This clearly demonstrates that the dispossessed African was subjected to hard labour and brutal beatings on the farm. The farm is like a prison for the African men and women who are no longer free to work and rest on

their own volition, instead they are treated like beasts of burden that have to be beaten in order to comply with the master's needs.

However, as the plot of *The Grass is Singing* unravels Lessing exhibits the futility of using physical violence by the white colonial settlers. She highlights that violence does not legitimise colonial power. The natives in turn use violence to beat up colonialism. This is brought out when Moses one of the natives, retaliates and murders Mary Turner. This again signifies that if blacks are continually violated and put in a tight corner they retaliate as what did Moses in *The Grass is Singing* and Kufahakurambwe in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe*. They could not continually take violence but in the end they retaliate and fight the system so as to regain their land which had been expropriated by the colonial settler.

Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe also explores how the farm organisation translates itself into a frontier that alienates black and white races. Vhuka, the white man's house on the farm stands alone in a spacious area while the compound for black people is overcrowded. Kufahakurambwe notices this as he comes from the nearby reserves and cycles through the farm:

Akatasva zvakare kabhizautare kake akagoti naro gan'a. Achiti panenge pachikomo, akati aripedza, ndokusiya nzira huru yainanga kumba kwomurungu otona kokuruboshwe kaienda kwaigara vashandi, kuseri kwechikomo. Akati fambei achibva asvika mumusha. Akadeva nedzimba dzemapango, dzedenderedzwa, dzakanga dzakati tswitswi kubatana sechibahwe cherunye, onanga kumba kwake. Akadeva nedzimba dzaiva nezvengo zvipfupi pfupi namatenga ouswa sokunonzi kwakanga kwanzu kuvakwe dzimba dzedenderedzwa dzine zvengo zvipfupi. Dzakanga dzakakomberedzwa neyavanoti mipanda. Akadzikanda kuruboshwe, ndokuramba oenda kwaiva nedzakanga dzisina kukomberedzwa kunova ndiko kwaiva neyake yakanga iri panenge pakazuru iine denga rouswa nezenge rimwe chete. Pazenge apa ndipo paiyanikira mukadzi wake nyama, izvi zvakatozongoitwawo zvazvo nomukadzi wake, muridzi akanga ariisira kuti vanhu vazive kuti iyi ndiyo imba yaforomani (p. 4).

(He rode his small bicycle across the rich and virgin farm land. After passing through the small hill he left the wide road on to the right that led to the farm owner's house, instead he took the narrow path on the left that led to where the compound for farm labourers was, behind the small hill. After cycling for some distance he entered the farm labourers' compound. He cycled along the round pole and dagga huts that were so overcrowded like maize grains on a cob taking the route to his house. He cycled along these so small houses that had roof thatch as if it was a requirement to build

such small round thatched huts. These huts were surrounded by small poles. He turned to the left and cycled to where the small huts were not surrounded by small poles, this is where his hut was, it was located on a higher ground than the rest of the houses. It had a thatched roof and a small portion which was roofed by a single sheet of zinc. His wife used this single zinc sheet for drying meat, this secondary role of drying meat came later but the owner had put that single sheet of zinc to show the community that this was the foreman's house and therefore was different from the rest of the compound dwellers on the farm.)

Through the contrasting images of the big and affluent farm house on one hand and the overcrowded and poorly built round dagga and pole thatched huts on the other, Chakaipa vividly paints a picture of a high degree of poverty among the dispossessed black men and women on the farm. The houses were so overcrowded and built from pole and dagga with grass thatch whilst the white man's house is so big, well aerated and built by good material. The nature of compound houses signifies the transient nature of blacks on the farm; their stay is temporary so there is no need to build permanent structures for them. It is only the white man who occupies a permanent and solid edifice on his land while these passers-by who provide labour are in transit. Even the road that leads to the white man's house is wide and well serviced whilst the one that leads to the labourers' compound is narrow, beaten footpath. The white man could easily drive his car to his house while the black farm labourers could never dream of owning a car but had to walk or cycle to their houses. Through these contrasting pictures, Chakaipa brilliantly exhibits how dispossessed indigenous men and women on the farm lived under abject poverty. Overcrowded houses could also easily spread diseases in the case of any disease outbreak. The foreman's hut had a single sheet of zinc to signify his better class as compared to the other farm labourers.

Magosvongwe (2013) has also observed this rift between the white opulent residence and the overcrowded black compound on the farm in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* and affirms that:

While the farm house is symbolic of affluence, power and security, the labourers' compound remains the antithesis in the manner that it depicts poverty, insecurity, domination and temporariness of the labourer's staying on the farm. Their temporary stay reduces them into expendable objects, more so when they sold their labour to the highest bidder (Magosvongwe, 2013: 165).

The black man and woman's stay on the farm is provisional and their main role is to assist the white man to produce the wealth that they never partake but is fully enjoyed by the white man.

Furthermore, the black people on the farm, both men and women never feel at home because the farm is designed in a way that makes it alien to the black people. Living in overcrowded houses as happens in the compound is strange to the black men and women and resembles the highest form of dispossession of land. The blacks had insufficient ground to build houses but have been deprived of this land by colonialism. Even on the farm their compound is built on a small piece of land so that they do not use much space of the farmland. The main prerogative for the farmer was to produce wealth for himself and was not interested in the physical comforts of the workers. To this effect Chirere (2004 cited in Magosvongwe, 2013: 165) says:

The farm remains psychologically external to the settler's nature... For the black farm labourer the farm is a lived irony. It is a familiar but perverted territory. Although the farm is situated in a familiar territory, it remains external to the black man's nature because it is organised for purposes outside his indigenous philosophy. The black labourer on the farm is consistently uneasy with both the farm and the white master.

The black people, men and women included who have been dispossessed of their land live in abject poverty on the farm. Their farm houses are temporary for their role is to create wealth for the colonial master. The compound can never provide proper shelter for the black people because it is not organised according to their social philosophy which informs the way they lived in their traditional societies. The compound therefore, signifies how the black people's residence has also been greatly altered due to dispossession of land for both genders. Both men and women of African descent are suffering the consequences of land alienation on a colonial farm.

Chambati and Magaramombe (2008) have also noted the rift between the white man's affluence and the black person's poverty on the farm. They argue that the black people did not have land for both shelter and food crops; they depended on the generosity of the white man for both food handouts and shelter. To demonstrate the black people's deprivation, Chambati and Magaramombe argue that:

It was not uncommon then to see that the worker, insecure on land that was not his, and lacking both agricultural and residential rights to it, ended up entirely dependent on the white farmer who, on his part, had no legal obligation to provide his worker with anything (Chambati & Magaramombe, 2008: 23).

Thus the black men and women on the colonial farm lived on the generosity of the white farmer who had no legal obligation to take care of him. Blacks are insecure for they know they lacked residential and agricultural rights on the colonial farm. Many white farmers therefore treated blacks on the farms as they wished and as they deemed fit in their own right. This explains why Vhuka would rather give his farm workers food rations and not pieces of land to grow their own crops. The logic was to keep them dependent on the welfare of the white farmer instead of becoming self-reliant. Black people especially women who were the main farmers and had initially produced food for the family are therefore persistently deprived of the freedom to grow their own food crops which in turn would have ensured their own food security.

Similarly in *The Grass is Singing* dispossessed black men and women live in abject poverty on the farm “...the native women stared and laughed; the filthy, underfed children crowded around, whispering to each other; the starved dogs slunk in the background among the vines and the mealies...” (Lessing, 1950: 135). Lessing like Chakaipa elaborately paints a picture of deprivation amongst the blacks who live on the farm compound. The filthy children symbolise lack of money to even buy soap and bath the children so that they could be presentable. Lessing also brings out the irony that even though the blacks provide the labour that enables the farmer to earn a lot of money they have been deprived of the basics to the extent that they cannot even feed their own children, that is why their children are malnourished. Even the dogs in the farm compound are starved because the owners hardly have any leftover food that would be thrown over to them. Lessing brilliantly paints a picture of the vicious cycle of poverty and deprivation in the black farm compound, when the black people fail to feed their children their dogs also fail to feed. Their continued dependency on the farm owner persists with no sight of reprieve or breaking that cycle. Furthermore, even if the farm grows any food crops, black farm labourers are barred from eating it for it belongs to the farm owner. Consequently, black families on the farm live in abject poverty, the farm symbolises the highest form of deprivation amongst black people for they live on a land that

is not theirs and also are starving in the midst of plenty. Tshuma (1997) also concurs that blacks on colonial farms lived in abject poverty.

Chakaipa in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* also presents that African employment on the farms as a symbol of enslaving whole families, men, women and children for the benefit of white land owners for generations. On Vhuka's farm, men, women and children all toil on the farm for Vhuka's benefit. The meager wages that they get are spent in buying whatever they want from Vhuka's farm store where they are in perpetual debt. The little money they get goes back to Vhuka and money continues to revolve round the colonial master (pp. 31-40). In addition, there is a farm school which does not run professionally but on the whims of the white farm owner; work on the farm takes precedence over the children's learning. When it is time to work on the farm everybody irrespective of age and gender has to participate in whatever activity will be carried out of the farm. Men, women, boys and girls all toil on the farm from 6 am to 630pm for the benefit of the farm owner (p. 13). Wadyazheve the farm school teacher says to the school children "*Kubvira mangwana, chikoro chinotanga pa-200 p.m. Mangwanani ose tinenge tiri kufodya kusvikira pa-12.00*" (p. 17). (Starting from tomorrow school starts at 2pm. The whole morning we will be working in the tobacco fields up to 12 noon). The school children start school at 2 o'clock in the afternoon when they have worked on the farm the whole morning. This means that they will be tired and no meaningful learning would take place.

Apart from school children whole families were yoked to the farm owner and this is brought out vividly where Chakaipa says, "*Kuzoti vana vaikwanisa kushanda vaenda, muzvinapurazi akakwira bhasikoro ondatora vakadzi kukomboni kwavakanga vari* (p.12). (After all the children who could work on the farm had gone to the fields, the farm owner rode his bicycle and went to the farm compound to collect the women). Women just like the men on the farm have been reduced to the white farmer's work horse. They no longer have access to the fertile land which they owned collectively but now work for the white man as beasts of burden. Marita in Hove's *Bones* (1988) has also been reduced to a workhorse; she also tirelessly works for Manyepo on the farm. Even on Christmas day, Vhuka, and the farm owner in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina Hembe* forces all the people to leave whatever they are doing to go and transplant tobacco from the nursery beds to the fields (pp. 26-27). Farm workers do not

make decisions that directly impinge on their own livelihoods; the presumed Christmas holiday is cancelled because the farm owner wants his tobacco to be transplanted. Women's right and primary role in agriculture, ranging from selecting the seeds that could be planted has been taken away by the coming of the colonial master who now dictates what should be planted and when it should be done.

The wages that these farm owners get are too low to buy anything meaningful for the family including food. Women who have been the primary producers of food in the family have been deprived of this role due to land dispossession on the colonial farm which leaves them with no power to play their significant role of ensuring food security in the home as they used to do before land dispossession. This explains why Kufahakurambwe and his wife have nothing to show when his tenure of employment on the farm is abruptly terminated by Vhuka. This is because of the poor wages and also the little he gets from his employer is spent on beer drinking. In addition, Alcohol was used by the colonial master to distract people from worrying about crucial issues of land dispossession, the little time they have after work which would provide an opportune time to think about land alienation would be spent in beer drinking and the people's mind would not be actively engaged on thinking about how they could extricate themselves from such a scenario. Indigenous people in a colonial context used alcohol as an escape from the day today realities on the farm and colonialism in general. Both men and women tend to hide from the economic hardships that have been ushered in by land deprivation in beer drinking.

Compounded with perpetual yoking is the fact that African labourers working on the farms are reduced to eternal infants. Vhuka calls the foreman by his first name Kufahakurambwe and even the teacher, Wadyazheve. Also, when Vhuka talks to Kufahakurambwe and Wadyazheve he does not use honorific plural. He uses the singular form where he says to the teacher "*Zvakanaka, zvotoita apa ndezvizvi, iwe wosevenzesa vana vechikoro. Ndinoda kuti iwe uve in charge*" (p. 15). (What we are doing now is this; you supervise the school children on the farm. I want you to be in charge). Similarly he says to Kufahakurambwe "*Wakanga uri kupi nguva yose iyi?*" (p. 30). (Where were you all this time?). The use of *iwe*, *wakanga* and *uri* instead of *imi*, *muri* and *makanga* does not use the honorific plural of respect. Use of the singular form by a white man when making reference to a black farm labourer does not

show intimacy. Instead in racially well thought-out semantics of the colony the use of the name and singular form is meant to demean the black person and is not supposed to be treated as a linguistic display of closeness. Black people who have been dispossessed of their land and now live on the farms are subjected to permanent infancy.

Similarly, in *The Grass is Singing* (1950), Doris Lessing also portrays how the white settler farmer demeans the black farm labourer to perpetual infancy. The two black labourers who have names in the novel are Moses and Samson. These are mature men but they are still called by their first names by the white men as way of belittling them and condemning them to perpetual infancy. Also in Hove's *Bones*, the workers on the farm, namely; Janifer, Chiriseri, Chisaga and Marita among others are called by their first names. This expresses the white settler dominant culture of stereotyping Africans as inferior to white people and hence earned no respect from the white superior race. Magosvongwe and Makwavarara (2015) concur with this denigration of the dispossessed black men and women. They argue that:

The denigration of the labourer's human worth chimes well with the 'boy' trope conferred on the poor and disempowered African population- *mabhoyi*- while land owners and wealth creators / owners are *varungu*, the skin colour notwithstanding (Magosvongwe and Makwavarara, 2015: 53).

Tagging black people as perpetual boys- *mabhoyi* neatly fits in the perpetual denigration of black people by white settlers in the colony. The dispossessed Africans no longer have any dignity in the land of their birth. They have been dispossessed of the land they formerly owned and are now degraded by the superior race which has expropriated their land.

Through Mavis and Paurosi's mother who eke out a living from the barren reserves, Chakaipa vividly captures the strong relationship between women and the land. Despite the unproductive nature of the soil these two women work very hard against all odds to produce food for the family. Chakaipa brilliantly paints how most African families in which the father is irresponsible as in Mhirimo and Kufahakuramwe the family is taken care of by the woman. Women in Shona cosmology contribute a lot to the well-being of the family hence the adage "musha mukadzi" (In order for a home to thrive very well it is because of a woman who works very hard). Through Mavis and Paurosi' mother Chakaipa brilliantly paints a picture of how women continue to have a powerful relationship with the land, they continue with their

farming activities to feed the family despite being dumped in barren areas. Through Paurosi's mother and Mavis, Chakaipa demonstrates women's propensity to work on the land, they are the ones who till the land for the benefit of the family. This is in line with what most scholars who have researched on the African continent have established that the farmer in Africa is a woman (Schmidt, 1992; Mvududu, 2000; Paradza-Makura, 2010). Men are only allocated land but the actual farm work is done by women. This explains why Mhirimo spends his time drinking beer and his family is food-secure because his wife, the actual farmer is providing for the family. Kufahakurambwe's family suffers because the actual farmer, mai Mavis who is supposed to farm and provide for the family has joined her husband in beer drinking. However, Kufahakurambwe's family is bailed out by Mavis, their daughter who has teamed up with Paurosi's mother and tills the land to produce food for the family. Chakaipa demonstrates that women in African traditional culture were not confined to the kitchen, they tilled the land. The symbol of the kitchen in African traditional set-up is not a place which is inferior but a very critical aspect of Shona traditional culture. It is the kitchen that women prepare the food that they grow in their fields to feed the family. It symbolises the place where critical family discussions are held. Even in death the dead lie in state in the kitchen. Thus the kitchen signifies a critical space in Shona culture and women are in charge of this critical space.

Similarly, in Tsetse Dngaremgwa's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) the woman is portrayed as the actual farmer who works on the land. Tambu grows vegetables for sale in her mother and grandmother's garden to send herself to school. She is only afforded the opportunity to go to school after her brother Nhamo dies. Maiguru, babamukuru's wife despite the fact that she is educated and is gainfully employed still takes pride in working in her garden, a clear demonstration of women's affinity with the land. Even Tambu's mother also does the actual tilling of the land, we never see her husband, Jeremiah being involved in the actual physical work done on the family land. Thus most authors writing in the African context are depicting what happens in African cosmology and endorsing that the actual farmer in Africa is a woman. Men just oversee but do not do the actual tilling of the land which is done by women, who are the primary agricultural producers on the continent (Schmidt, 1992).

Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe also depicts that most black men and women have no other option but to live on the harsh working environment on the farm. Outside the farm, in the reserve land cannot sustain life for both men and women and that is why they are forced by circumstances to work on Vhuka's farm as cheap labourers. This is because no meaningful livelihood can be practiced in the barren reserves. The foreman's wife, Mavis' mother clearly brings this out when she says to her husband after they have been sacked from Vhuka's farm, "*Kana uchindiponda, unoponda zvako. Handingaendi nezimunhu rakadai rinonwa doro risingazivi nhamo. Iko kumusha kwaunoti tiende tinonodyei?*" (p. 42). (If you have to beat me up you will do so. I will not follow a drunkard to the reserve who does not know how to fend for the family. What will we survive on in the reserves where you want us to go and live?). Through Mavis' mother, the foreman's wife, Chakaipa portrays that colonialism has packed black men and women into uncultivable reserves in climatic regions that were often prone to poor rainfall and frequent drought. The foreman's wife does not want to follow her husband to the rural home in the reserve where she fears to die from starvation. She knows very well that the soils are not good enough for any crops to thrive and she prefers to remain on the farm despite the harsh living conditions that people suffer on the farm. The foreman's wife sees the farm as a better devil than the nearby reserve, at least on the farm they are given food rations by the white man when he decides to do so, and going to the reserve is condemning them to worse off poverty than the one they experience on the farm. Mavis' mother sees home, the nearby reserve as a colonial construction which has nothing to offer them. It is only on Vhuka's big and productive farm that her family can have a sustainable livelihood.

Similarly in Hove's *Bones* the farm workers also refuse to go back to the reserves because there is nothing there. Murume, Marita's husband, concisely presents the bleakness that characterise the nearby reserve; "I am not going back to that reserve where dogs and people eat from one plate. The reserves are not even good for donkeys to live in" (Hove, 1988: 18). Hove through Murume presents the barrenness of the nearby reserve such that both dogs and human beings scramble for the same food. Even animals like donkeys that can survive in dry climatic conditions cannot survive in such barren areas. Thus the farm ironically presents a safe haven for many rural people. Chidora and Mandizvidza (2015: 344) conclude that; "It is tragically ironic that the place offering the most hope happens to be also the epicentre of the most suffering." This demonstrates how the dispossessed Africans, both men and women can bear the brunt of farm life because the nearby reserves are barren areas which have nothing to

offer to them. The capitalist economy on the farm offers Africans false refuge and they think that they can survive better on the farm than in the barren areas they have been forcibly moved to by the colonial settlers.

Even some of the men based in the reserves also know this historical truth that a sustainable livelihood can only be derived from the farm. Mhirimo says at a beer drinking gathering:

Hamuzivi kuti ndiforomani here? Heya mumwe ahati zvitsoka tafara-tafara muzhizha achiti ndoenda kunotsvaga upfu kwaVhuka nzara yaruma. Tsano ukaona zvikadzi zvokuno zvouya kuzotsvaga upfu kupurazi kwako, tora chamboko uzvipure stereki ndava zvinodada. 'Hapana chakaipa mukwasha. Chava chirungu chino rega vatengese. Vakasadaro muno mumusha vanopona nei?' (pp. 36-37).

(You mean to tell me that you do not know that this is the foreman? Oh some of you will go to Vhuka's farm to look for mealie-meal during the summer when they have suffered from hunger. Brother-in-law if you see women from this reserve coming to fend for mealie-meal at your farm, take a *sjambok* and whip them because these women are very proud for they are selling beer to you instead of just giving you for free. 'There is nothing wrong with selling beer my brother-in-law. These are modern times let them sell beer. If they do not sell beer what will they survive on in this reserve.)

Through the dialogue between Mhirimo and Kufahakurambwe Chakaipa brings to the fore the fact that the farm is the only source of livelihood. Mhirimo forbids his brother-in-law Kufahakurambwe who is the foreman at Vhuka's farm from assisting people from the reserves with food when they come looking for food on the farm. Kufahakurambwe is quick to state that selling beer is far from being the source of problems, it actually is now a source of livelihood since people in the reserves cannot survive in that barren area which is unproductive.

The general suffering of dispossessed men and women is neatly captured in Thomas Mapfumo's song "Pfumuvu paruzevha" which when literally translated means strife in the reserves. In this song life among the people of African descent starts off very well, when people live in peace and tranquility, and the people have freedom to freely move around. Later on in the song life changes from freedom and general peacefulness to difficult times in which indigenous people live in constant fear, they lack freedom to freely move around because their land has been taken away. The reserves are portrayed as a creation of an external force and they strip black men and women of their land, the indigenous people lack

land to till their crops, build their houses and the joy that they formerly enjoyed has vanished. Mapfumo aptly summarises the problems of land alienation in a colonial set up in that song. This explains why the dialogue between Mhirio and Kufahakurambwe portrays the problems that have been brought in by colonialism which has stripped indigenous men and women of their prime land and dumped them into overcrowded barren reserves.

Consequently, the African women who have been dispossessed of their land now resort to selling beer to earn a living. While women used to buy men's labour through beer, *nhimbe* (work party), in traditional Shona society they are now using the same beer as a source of livelihood. In the traditional set up women used beer to lure men to come and join them work in the fields. After the land has been taken away from them, the women are very creative, enterprising and very quick to adapt and embrace change as it comes. Women are very chameleotic in character; they now either brew beer for sale or provide cheap labour on the farm to fulfil their obligation of being the primary food producers for the family in African cosmology.

Furthermore, the dialogue between Kufahakurambwe and Mhirimo brings out the fact that even the money for selling beer is inadequate; people have to get food on the colonial farm which is productive. This also explains why Paurosi's mother the presumed exceptional farmer also goes to seek employment on Vhuka's farm to raise money for school fees for her son (pp. 45-49). Also, Mavis eventually abandons the reserves and seeks employment in the city of Gwelo because the native reserve offers nothing in terms of sustainable livelihood (pp. 89-112). People like Mavis and Paurosi's mother have failed to sustainably earn a living from the reserves because it is a barren area which cannot sustain that.

To make matters worse the white man uses strategies to divide black people. Kufahakurambwe is handpicked by Vhuka to manage his fellow Africans as the foreman. The foreman is a man because the actual working of the land is not the prerogative of men but women who engage in the substantive tilling of the land. As the foreman Kufahakurambwe however, copies his master and uses this position to oppress his kindred, dispossessed men and women on the farm. The threat on the foreman's job security arises from ill-treating those

under him. When Kufahakurambwe absents himself from work, he makes his fellow Africans work even harder to make up for the day that the foreman was enjoying himself drinking beer in the reserve. The foreman makes people work extra hours than what was required by the white man. Chakaipa brings out the foreman's oppressive nature where he says:

Ndiforomani atiudza kuti iwe womene ndiwe wati kunofanira kupedzwa minda miviri, vakadzi vanofanira kupedza dzimba mbiri dzefodya. Vhudzi romurungu rakati nyandanu. 'Handina kumutaurira zvole izvi. Ini ndati vanhu vanofanira kusevenza sitereki. Zvakanaka teacher, chitaurira vana vole vaende kumabarns nokuti vakasaenda, fodya yese yatemwa nhasi inoipa ndinoruzwa hundreds of pounds. Chikoro munozopinda zuva vole mangwana (p.11).

(It is the foreman who has told us that you yourself have instructed that two fields of tobacco should be harvested today, also women should finish tying two barns of tobacco. The white man was very angry and retorted, 'I did not tell him all this. I only said people should work very hard. It is alright teacher please tell all the children to go and work in the tobacco barns because failure to do so would result in harvested tobacco going bad and me losing hundreds of pounds. You will have the whole day for school tomorrow.)

The foreman therefore becomes an extension of the colonial master, a tool of a system to facilitate the process of primitive accumulation in which Vhuka is involved (Zhuwarara, 1994:5). The foreman prides himself in pleasing the white man at the expense of his fellow Africans. Dispossession of land has resulted in the foreman's zeal to please the master such that he gets rewards at the expense of his fellow African labourers. The foreman now sings for his supper at the farm and he wants to maintain his cordial relations with his master by oppressing his fellow black people. The foreman fears being fired from work and going back to the reserves where there is no form of livelihood. The African philosophy of being one's brother's keeper has been usurped by colonialism which has deprived people of their land and makes them rise against each other as exemplified by Kufahakurambwe.

Chakaipa's *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* has managed to present the effects of the dispossession of land in a colonial context. The author has concealed his story under the social critique of alcoholism so that his novel could pass through the strict censorship of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau which forbade any subversive material to be published during the colonial period. Through the social critique of alcoholism Chakaipa has managed to portray the effects of dispossession of land on indigenous men and women in a colonial context. However it is significant to critique Chakaipa's social vision in the novel.

5.4.2.1 A Critique of Chakaipa's Social Vision in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe*

Chakaipa in his novel *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* presents dispossessed men and women as being contented with living on the farm despite the violence that colonial farmers perpetrate in these establishments. The dispossessed black men and women who are in the reserves yearn to go and live on Vhuka's farm. Likewise, those who employed on the farm detest leaving the farm. The blacks who have been marginalised of their fertile land make no effort to regain it. According to Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity, people of African descent, both men and women are at the centre of charting out their history but Chakaipa's characters seem to be satisfied with the new colonial set up. Paurosi's mother tries to be a successful farmer in the barren areas; she represents blacks who have accepted their fate of living in the reserves which they now take as home. Chakaipa, unlike Mutsuairo, only manages to show the effects of the colonial legislations on the black people's land but offers no solutions on how black people can resolve such problems. Literature should offer solutions to the burning issues of the day (Achebe, 1989). As an author Chakaipa could have used the metaphors he used to present the gender and land question and offer solutions to the black people's problems. His concluding chapter should not have hinged on helpless and hopeless characters who accept the new colonial dispensation without finding ways of resolving their own alienation from the land.

Chakaipa, despite clearly presenting the effects of dispossession in his novel and trying to evade the strict Literature Bureau from preventing his novel from being published, sometimes overdid it in his portrayal of the virtues of the white man. Chakaipa depicts all white people as very generous and willing to assist black people. Mavis is taken in by a white lady who gives her employment and allows her to live with her sister Greddes. When Mavis goes home to visit her family the white lady buys Mavis some goodies to take home. In addition, Chakaipa portrays Vhuka as a very generous white man who does not want his farm workers to be overworked. When the foreman overworks the farm labourers Vhuka always slaughters a beast for them to enjoy. He also gives his farm workers over and above their wages extra food rations and extra money as incentives for working so hard on the farm (pp. 14-20). The farm workers in the novel are a contented lot with these small incentives at the expense of their land. He does not present some of the workers who were not contented with the

incentives they got on the farm, and these seemed to represent the bulk of indigenous men and women who eventually had to fight the colonial system in order for them to regain their land. This is not surprising coming from someone from a missionary dispensation. Chakaipa might have been blinkered from the harsh realities of colonialism because of his missionary background and colonial brainwashing in which most blacks aspired to be like white people.

In a bid to portray the white man as good in order for his work to be published, Chakaipa in some cases misrepresents the colonial history of Rhodesia. There is ample evidence on the history of Zimbabwe which testifies to the brutal nature and harsh environment on which black men and women suffered on colonial farms (Zhuwarara, 1994; Magosvongwe, 2013; Chidora & Mandizvidza, 2015; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Furthermore, Chakaipa justifies Vhuka's beating of the foreman because he has absconded from work. In addition, when Kufahakurambwe fights back, Vhuka easily forgives him and is actually proud of his foreman for fighting back. This is brought out where the Vhuka says, “‘Shake hands, *uri murume.*’ *Vakabatana chishanu. ‘Zvakanaka mangwana unouya kumba kwangu.’ Murungu akabva aenda*” (p. 31). (“‘Shake hands, you are a real man.’ They shook hands. It is alright please come to my house tomorrow. And the white man left). Thus in trying to abide by the requirements of the Literature Bureau, Chakaipa gives a warped presentation of the white man in colonial Rhodesia. White men in colonial Rhodesia would never tolerate a black person fighting them back; worse still on their private property. Such unbecoming behaviour would not have been tolerated by the colonial regime. Kufahakurambwe would have been arrested for such misdemeanor. Chakaipa overdid his presentation of the benevolent white man in his portrayal of Vhuka at the expense of colonial history in Rhodesia and what transpired on the farms as far as white and black racial relations were concerned.

Moreso, Chakaipa presents women in both the reserves and the colonial farm as docile people who just accepted the status quo ushered in by colonialism. He did not portray the other group of women in the reserves who believed that they had to join hands with men and fight to regain back that land. Some of the women in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* celebrate the little incentives, the carrot that is dangled to them and prevents them from seeing the bigger picture of taking back their alienated land. These women, together with some men on the farm represent a group that has been impoverished and have lost their dignity. Celebrating

the small incentives is now a survival tactic for people on the farms since they no longer have the means of livelihood- the land. Chakaipa by presenting women and men who appreciate the little incentives seems to focus mainly on women who are inactive and yet in the colonial period women were not docile but were actively involved in the process of regaining back the stolen lands as amply demonstrated in Irene Staunton's *Mothers of the Revolution* (1990).

There are also some positive aspects that Chakaipa presents in *Dzatsukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe*. He vividly portrays women who are industrious on the barren pieces of land in the native reserves. He presents Paurosi's mother as a successful farmer who has accepted the fate of the reserves and tries to earn a living from it. Paurosi's mother grows all kinds of vegetables and is doing quite well to the extent that at one point she uses the money to pay for Paurosi's school fees (p. 51). She also grows maize from which she gets her mealie-meal and her family never goes hungry despite her husband being a drunkard (p. 52). Chakaipa presents Paurosi's mother as an exceptional farmer who manages to successfully practise farming against all the odds in a barren reserve which is unsuitable for cultivation of crops. The success of female peasant farmer is brilliantly captured where he says, "*Paurosi akasvikoti naro basa, murume akagoita. Akabatsira mai vake kuchera nzungu vakagopedza; ndokupinda muchibage vakapedza minda yakati. Amai ndokumusiya nehanzvadzi yake, Sara, vari muchibage ivo vondobatira kuzviyo*" (p. 77). (During the school holidays Paurosi worked so hard in the fields. He assisted his mother to harvest groundnuts and they finished; then several fields of maize and they finished. His mother left him with his sister, Sara, harvesting maize while she moved on to the sorghum field). This demonstrates that Paurosi's mother was a very successful farmer who could grow maize, groundnuts and other cereals despite the sandy soils black people had been condemned to. Paurosi's mother also goes to an extent of teaching Mavis to be contented with the barren reserves and practise farming in those unproductive areas (pp.61-65). Mavis successfully imbibes this teaching and she manages to grow maize which sustains the family. She sells the surplus and keeps the money which is stolen by her mother who spends it on beer drinking (p. 86). Chakaipa's peasant women are a typical representation of women in a colonial context who had to bear more burdens of sustaining their families in the absence of their male folk (Schmidt, 1992).

One respondent critiqued Chakaipa's portrayal of women in the colonial reserves. The interviewee said on comparing women in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* with those in the colonial reserve:

This is unlike the women in Chakaipa's *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* who after Vhuka slaughters them an ox enjoys their wretched state. They are not eager to fight for land ownership. Mai Mhirimo is happily practicing agriculture in a Tribal Trust Land. She has accepted the Tribal Trust Land as a home and seeks to school Mavis to accept the same reality (Field Notes, 10 February 2016).

The interviewee views Paurosi's mother as passive and has come to accept the reserves as home such that she works very hard on the barren areas. To paint women as passive will be doing gross injustice to the feminine gender that sustained families through their hard work on the land. Women had to make sure that their families had been fed and hence had more responsibilities to the family. The women through practicing peasant agriculture they are the breadwinners for their families. They provide for the families while men like Kufahakurambwe and Mhirimo spent time in beer drinking. This is a typical representation of women in colonial reserves because they formed the backbone of peasant agriculture and continued to produce for the family whilst their husbands had moved into colonial establishments or spent time in beer drinking.

Despite the stated shortcomings of Chakaipa's social vision, he, like Mutswairo, should be commended for successfully concealing the dispossession of land in his social critique of excessive beer drinking. If he had boldly stated that the novel was about land dispossession of blacks by the white colonial settlers his novel would not have been published. Thus critics of literature should not hasten to condemn the novel as a mere critique of excessive beer drinking a conclusion which can only be reached after doing a superficial reading of the novel. An analytical critique of the novel would however reveal its complex plot of the effects of colonial legislations and dispossession of black people's land. The novel amply presents the new colonial set up which restructured the Zimbabwean landscape into native reserves, colonial farms, urban areas, mines and mission stations thereby disorienting the black people's relationship with the land. Africans are now dispossessed by this new dispensation which left them with no land to grow crops or to build their homes. They became strangers in their motherland while the white man enjoyed the benefits of land ownership as portrayed in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe*.

5.4.3 Religious Hypocrisy and its Effects on Gender and Land Ownership in *Pafunge*

Thompson Kumbirai Tsodzo's *Pafunge* (1972) satirises how the church connived with colonialism in dispossessing land from people of African descent, both men and women have been stripped of their land. The title of the novel *Pafunge* which when literally translated means "think about it" is an invocation from the author who wants the reader(s) to see beyond what is causing all these problems that are happening both in the city and in the reserves as a result of land dispossession. The author used that invocation possibly just to bypass the Literature Bureau's strong censorship laws that prevented any work that was assumed subversive from being published. A quick reading of the novel might not present gender dispossession of land. However a critical analysis of the novel further points to land alienation of both indigenous men and women. Since men and women owned the land collectively, alienation of land from the male folk was just as good as alienating it from the women as well. This is explained by the fact that in African worldview men could only access land once they got married, under the marriage institution. Bachelors or single men were not allocated land but could only acquire it through marriage, once they had a woman in the form of a wife in their lives that is when they were allocated land by the chief. The analysis of the novel takes an Afrocentric approach which does not discriminate between men and women. This then implies that the alienation of land from men through the colonial establishment of a mission station also deprived women of the land that they formerly enjoyed, it also had effects on gender and land ownership in African cosmology. Besides it further demonstrates an Africana womanist approach in which both men and women were in the struggle together with men for they both suffered land alienation together. Hence women were in concert together with men and faced the challenges that befell their men like land dispossession together with them.

Pafunge depicts how the church through the establishment of mission stations and the inculcation of Christian values amongst Africans stripped Africans of their traditional beliefs. The church therefore, never questioned why colonialism was taking away land from African men and women. Using an Afrocentric approach one learns of the historical dispossession of land in colonial Rhodesia. Black men and women during the colonial period were forcibly removed from the fertile areas they formerly enjoyed by the colonial masters. The church was

silent about all this, it did not take a stance against such practices, and it condoned the legislations that were imposed by the colonial regime (Vengeyi, 2015). The church did not speak against land dispossession because it was a beneficiary of such land. It only spoke against colonialism after the enactment of the 1969 Land Tenure Act but did not speak against the previous colonial land dispossession legislations like the Matabeleland Order of Council of 1884, The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. The Land Tenure Act of 1969 was faintly dissimilar from the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and it is this slight difference that affected the missionary interests such that some of them on, the church began speaking against colonialism. Mtetwa (2015: 149) observes this religious hypocrisy and affirms that: “There was very little difference between the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Land Tenure Act of 1969 but that little difference affected the churches in Rhodesia resulting in their outcry against the Rhodesia political system.”

Moreso, to be noted is the fact that most missionaries who spoke against the colonial enterprise from the 1960s onwards did so in their individual capacities. They were also influenced by the rise of Black Nationalist politics that was now forming parties to comprehensively fight the colonial dispossession of land. While the dispossession of land might be interpreted as to have no effects on gender, a critical exposition of the novel can never leave out the gender dimension because the people who were dispossessed were African men and women who collectively owned this land as enshrined in African cosmology. Both men and women of African descent suffered together the effects of land dispossession, thereby bringing to the fore prioritisation of race, class, and gender. Men and women of African descent were affected by the land dispossession because they were black and regarded as an inferior race as enshrined in Africana Womanism.

Even though these individual missionaries spoke against colonialism, on the other hand the church through the establishment of mission stations and the inculcation of Christian beliefs amongst Africans, connived with colonialism in dispossessing men and women of their fertile land which they previously owned. The church, unlike the colonial settler, who mainly concentrated on taking away fertile land for farming and the production of wealth, the church did not only take away land that was fertile but it also stripped blacks even of the infertile

land. Tsodzo accurately captures this through his portrayal of Mharapara Mission which is located in the Sadzajena area, a place near present day Chivhu which happens to be a reserve. Chiwome (1996) has also observed the church's role in taking away both fertile and infertile land when he argues that the Sadzajena area which lies adjacent to Mharapara mission is a wasteland. This is because missionaries, unlike the colonial farmer, were more interested in indoctrinating African people so that they do not see anything wrong with the whole colonial enterprise.

Tsodzo brilliantly captures the role of the mission station in dispossessing African men and women of their land through Mharapara mission. Mharapara mission in Sadzajena area now belongs to the missionaries. It is now privately owned by the church and signifies how the traditional forms of land ownership have been usurped by the colonial establishment of a mission station. In the traditional African set up, land was communally owned and both men and women had access to it. Now with the establishment of mission stations like Mharapara mission, land is now privately owned by the church. To bring to the fore the fact that churches now own land through the establishment of mission stations, Tsodzo says,

Mharapara mishoni zvino yakanga yava mishoni huru kwazvo. Pakanga pazara nedzimba dzakapfirirwa namarata. Imba yakanga yakanaka kupinda dzimwe dzese yaiva yomukuru wechikoro, Mufundisi Lovedale, vanova ndivo vakanga varera musikana ainzi Rudo kwamakore gumi namasere kubvira kuzviuraya kwakaita mai vake (p.1)

(Mharapara mission had now grown very big. It was now full of houses with zinc sheet roofs. The most beautiful house on the mission station was that of the principal of the school, Rev Lovedale who had taken care of Rudo and raised her ever since she was left by her mother who had committed suicide).

Through Mharapara mission Tsodzo depicts that Africans had been dispossessed of their land. These missionaries did not initially own land in African communities but some of them had come as part of the pioneer column and ended up benefiting, like their political counterparts, owning large tracts of land on which they established their mission stations. Vengeyi has also noted this and argues that the Jesuit Missionary group of the Roman Catholic Church was part of the pioneer column that invaded and expropriated land in Zimbabwe (Vengeyi, 2015).

Furthermore, through the graphic picture of the expanded mission station, Tsodzo vividly presents not only the establishment of a mission station but its rapid growth and sprawling into the nearby reserve area. This therefore demonstrates the gradual dispossession of the African men and women's land. Tsodzo like Chakaipa conceals the story of black dispossession of land "in an elaborate satire of colonial Christianity" (Chiwome, 1996: 112). As argued before, he conceals his story in a satire to evade the ruthless Rhodesia Literature Bureau which would have banned his work if it perceived it to be demonstrating the hidden links between colonialism and Christianity in dispossessing indigenous men and women of their land.

Tsodzo just like Chakaipa conceals land dispossession in his religious satire in *Pafunge*. He does not brazenly discuss land dispossession in his novel but conceals it with various literary techniques so as to evade the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. Most people interviewed for this study concur with the idea that Tsodzo does not openly discuss land ownership in his novel. One interviewee argues that:

Most of the authors were not very bold. They merely mention the challenge around land ownership without giving a comprehensive and convincing dimension. Mostly they highlight those historical factors that are concerned with land ownership in relation to race rather than those that talk about gender and land ownership. In general Shona fiction is characterised by a certain level of timidity and defiance when it comes to exploring issues from a historical and political point. This issue has been given cursory attention. The historical forces that underpin this experience have not been convincingly highlighted...I would say they tried their best under the circumstances. Authors' social vision is often shaped by their political sympathies and the land question in Zimbabwe is a highly politicised issue. So boldness may become a highly compromised thing (Interview with a Reader, 13 May 2016).

At the beginning of the interviewee's statement on judging Shona fiction, *Pafunge*, included, the interviewee was quick to condemn it for not confidently addressing land issues but later on realised that these authors were working under very difficult circumstances such that if they wanted their work to be published they had to be shrewd in their approach to issues that were regarded as confrontational by the then colonial government. The issue of land was highly political and regarded as subversive material (Chiwome, 1996). Such literature would never see the light of day hence fictional writers had to find ways of concealing their political orientations in metaphors and symbols so that these could not be easily deciphered by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. This therefore explains why Tsodzo covertly addresses land

issues in his novel but a critical reading of the novel demonstrates how the church also worked in cahoots with colonialism in dispossessing indigenous men and women of their fertile land.

The establishment of Mharapara mission station symbolises the establishment of mission stations throughout the country. On the Christmas Eve of Nurse Annatoria Tichafa's death there were some music competitions by various church missions at Mharapara mission. Thus it was not only Mharapara Mission which had been established but there were quite a number of them dotted throughout the country. Reverend Lovedale had been transferred from another mission station. This is clearly brought out where Tsodzo says,

Panguva iyi Mufundisi Lovedale vakanga vasati vava paMharapara mishoni. Vakanga vachiri pane imwe mishoni kwaChirumuhanzu pedyo neFuruziveki, shure kweChitsuwetsuwe kana munhu achienda Vhitori. Mushure mokufa kwaAnnatoria, Mufundisi ava ndivo vakabva vaitwa ivo mukuru paMharapara. Gore ravakauya ndiro gore rakanyangarika mudzidzisi Phainos Kamunda" (p. 27).

(During this time Rev Lovedale was not yet at Mharapara mission. He was still at another mission station in Chirumuhanzu, near Furuziveki, after Chitsuwetsuwe along the Victoria road. After Annatoria's death, Reverend Lovedale was made the head of Mharapara mission. It is during this same year that Phainos Kamunda who was teaching at Mharapara disappeared from that mission station.)

Through Reverend Lovedale's transfer from another mission station to Mharapara Tsodzo depicts the mushrooming of mission stations in colonial Rhodesia. He also subtly demonstrates that the dispossession of African people's land was through colonial establishments like mission stations. Of great significance is the fact that missionaries just like the colonial settlers did not occupy vacant land but had to displace Africans who were originally settled in these areas and established mission stations (Mtetwa, 2015). Accordingly, the missionary also stripped black people of their land and forced them to live in reserves where there was a lot of overcrowding and no meaningful production of food crops was practised.

Quite a number of historians and literary critics concur with the fact that the church collaborated with colonialism in expropriating African people's land. By African people it implies both genders since men and women collectively owned land through the marriage institution which gave land rights to both men and women. There is sufficient proof in

historical sources that demonstrate that the establishment of mission stations also dispossessed black men and women of their land. Chitando (2005: 142) argues that “most of the farms in the church’s possession were gifts from Cecil John Rhodes for successfully helping the settlers in taking over the black people’s land.” Religion was able to achieve that by taking over the conscience of the black people. It taught them to believe that they were just passers-by on earth and were not supposed to be anxious about acquiring material possessions, “Blessed are the poor for they shall be called children of God.” Such Christian ideology was captured in some of the hymns that the missionaries composed for the Africans. “The Ndau hymn composed by the colonial missionaries had these words *Tora nyika, ndipe Jesu ndodakara ndiye*” (Take all the land, simply give me Jesus and I am happy) (Vengeyi, 2015: 133). The inculcation of such values by the church made black men and women to believe that owning land was not necessary but what was important was receiving Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and saviour. In that way the church brainwashed the indigenous African to see no value in the land and therefore to endorse the expropriation of land by the colonial settlers. The church was giving legitimacy to colonialism; it sanctioned its existence through its teachings that made indigenous men and women not to question the colonial enterprise.

According to Kahari (2009) the expropriation of land by the church represented a terrible offence against the black men and women. This is because “irrespective of denomination, all colonial churches accumulated vast tracts of land that Africans had been dispossessed of” (Mtetwa, 2015: 141). Mtetwa further summarises in terms of land size the land which was expropriated by the different missionaries working together with the colonial enterprise. He argues that:

The pioneers of the missionary enterprise in Matabeleland were missionaries of the London Missionary Society (LMS) who started their first mission at Inyati in 1889 and the second at Hope Fountain in 1870. Inyati mission covered 8 000 acres and Hope Fountain 6 000 acres...The Methodist were given land by Rhodes, including five stands in the Salisbury Township and three farms of 3 000 acres each. At almost the same time pioneer missionaries of the Salvation Army arrived at Fort Salisbury in 1891, and were given 3000 acres in Mazowe valley... Missionary bodies scrambled for land in the then Rhodesia, with the Catholics dispossessing the Chishawasha people of 12 000 acres in 1892 to put up a mission station. The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa led by AA Louw settled at Morgenster on a farm of 6 000 morgen. In 1893, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions settled at Mt Selinda and Chikore in Chipinge. In 1894, the Seventh Day Adventist Church

invaded a farm of 12 000 acres at Solusi... Within a century, the church had acquired almost a third of a million acres, with the Catholics almost having in their possession nearly half this amount (Mtetwa, 2015: 142-145).

These colonial missionaries invaded land at the blessing of the BSAC or were given land directly by Rhodes for the role the church played in the colonial enterprise. This is because Rhodes believed that “it clearly made good sense to allow various denominations to acquire such large tracts of land in order to consolidate the settler’s vested interests” (Palmer, 1977: 36-37). Consequently the church made the whole colonial enterprise easier by working on the minds of the indigenous people. It indoctrinated them such that they did not comprehend the importance of owning land, instead they were supposed to endeavour to seek the kingdom of heaven, and once they achieved this, all other things would be added unto them. This distracted indigenous men and women from the deprivation of land and focused on seeking the kingdom of God.

The missionaries were on Rhodes’ pay role and wrote annual reports to Rhodes; they were accountable to him as their master whom they worked with in the alienation of black people’s land (Mtetwa, 2015). The missionary scramble for land in colonial Rhodesia is properly summarised by Mtetwa when he says:

The partition of Zimbabwe among Christian missionaries could be viewed as a replay of the partition of Africa at the 1884 Berlin Conference. What was partitioned is nothing other than land, and all mission stations were set where Africans were originally settled (Mtetwa, 2015: 145).

This is in disagreement with the missionaries’ argument that they were not part of the grand colonial enterprise which exploited Africans of their land.

Mugambi also observed the hypocrisy of the church in pretending to be preaching the word of God but simultaneously laying the foundation for colonialism by brainwashing Africans into disregarding the prevailing land estrangement. He claims that:

In fact colonial maps designed at the 1884/1885 Berlin Conference followed Christian spiritual colonies. Lands that had the presence of British missionaries were partitioned to Britain, and the same was true for Germany, Portugal and France among others (Mugambi, 1995: 205)

Mugambi demonstrates that missionaries, just like the colonial powers, also competed in the scramble for expropriation of African people's land as exemplified by the various mission stations that were established in different parts of the country. Most of the mission stations unlike Mharapara Mission were located in fertile areas that had very good climate. Areas like Chishawasha, Mutare (Hartzell), Mazowe, Morgenster, Penhalonga, among others that were taken by missionaries are fertile and quite fit for human habitation. Therefore missionaries, in the same vein as colonial settlers, also drove African people out of their land. Just like their counterparts, the colonial settlers, missionaries also preferred areas with better climatic conditions and good soils.

African land which had been taken away by the missionaries was designated and governed as 'Christian villages' (Zvobgo, 1996 cited in Mtetwa, 2015). In these Christian villages Christian values were propagated. These values endeavoured to denigrate African traditional religion and in the process confirm and legitimate colonialism since the congregants were taught not to be preoccupied with earthly life for they were going to find eternal joy in heaven. For this reason Africans were not supposed to query land dispossession but just to be content with the way land ownership had turned out to be. Instead, their main goal was now to "seek yee the kingdom of heaven and everything was going to be given unto them." As a result Mtetwa (2015) sums up the role of missionaries in the colonial expedition when he argues that:

Missionary education, health facilities and religion were meant to manufacture docility, destroying African history, cultural values and traditions so as to make Africans willing tools of the capitalist economy. Religion and education were potent weapons to control the minds of the oppressed in the hands of the Empire (Mtetwa, 2015: 149).

Tsodzo therefore brilliantly captures this complementary role of religion in the colonial enterprise. He has managed to expose the religious hypocrisy which called for docility amongst Africans whilst their land was being expropriated by missionaries and their settler friends. The loss of men and women's land to colonial missionaries and settlers meant that the indigenous people had lost their source of livelihood, identity and history (Magosvongwe, 2013). The new forms of land ownership introduced by colonialism deprived both male and female Africans of the rights they formerly enjoyed on the land.

In *Pafunge* through Reverend Lovedale's house, Tsodzo manages to capture the rift between white missionaries and the black Africans who have been dispossessed of their land. At the mission station Reverend Lovedale has a very big house. Even at a mission station where the gospel preaches equality since all are children of God, some members of society still appear better than others. Reverend Lovedale's house is the most beautiful house at the mission as compared to the houses of the black teachers, nurses and other groups of workers that make the mission run. Tsodzo is presenting the hypocritical nature of the missionary enterprise that despite preaching equality and that all are created in the image of God, the mission station just like other colonial establishments demarcates people according to race. Blacks at the mission station also do not have permanent residence; they do not belong to such an establishment. Anna, a nurse at the mission station, lives in a small room even though she belongs to the aristocratic class of the mission station. As an African her stay at the mission station is transitory for this is now privately owned land which belongs to white missionaries and the church. The mission station land now belongs to the church and the white missionaries. People of African descent who are on the mission station are only there to assist in the propagation of Christian values among their fellow Africans through impartation of Christian values to enhance docility and permanent establishment of the colonial set up.

Anna just like her daughter Rudo has no roots, identity, home or even a relative that we hear of in the novel. The mission station represents orphan hood to dispossessed men and women who no longer have a place to call home. Anna is buried at the mission and she requests through a letter that her daughter be looked after by the white reverend at Mharapara mission. While the mission station is philanthropic, it is to blame for the severing of African ties; it has caused the destruction of the African family. Even though the church has spiritual comfort it cannot do much to uphold the African family. Anna and Rudo's lack of place they can call home symbolises dispossession of the African people's land of the highest order. In Shona worldview people will always have a rural home but Anna and her daughter do not have, neither do they have any known relatives. This signifies the climax of the dispossession of the African people's land such that they became homeless as they saw the mission station as their home. Not only women are homeless but also the men at the mission station have also been stripped of their land and have to stay at the mission station. This marks the land dispossession of both genders as espoused by Africana Womanism that both Africana men and women suffered under colonialism.

Colonialism through the establishment of mission stations has condemned black men and women into reserves where they could not grow enough crops to sustain their families. The area that surrounds Mharapara mission where the rest of the villagers live is a desolate tract which could not sustain the production of crops to feed the black families that live in that reserve. This is brought out through Winnie Nhamo who is an emaciated child and is not able to get the necessary food which gives her the required nutrients in the reserves. This is brought out where Tsodzo says:

Anna akanga audza amai vaWinnie kuti kana vaida kuti mwana wavo apone vaifanira kudya zvakawanda kwazvo. Sezvo mudzimai uyu aibva kumba kusingadyiwi kuchigutwa haana kusvikoitira kamwana kake zvese zvaifanirwa. Nokudaro kunyangwe zvazvo mucheche uyu airwara asina kuti sarai mugare, kana mukabika idyai, akava mwana akatanhauka kwazvo. Utera hwakaita kuti azokwanisa kukambaira vezera rake vave kumira. Pakakazenge kogonawo kumira kachidzengedzeka serwaivhi ruri padzinde rorukweza, vezera rako vakanga votodhanaira...Nokudaro akakura ari ndonda yomwana, aina kamuviri kakangoonjekera kunge mhuru yakafirwa namai vayo. Tukumbo pasi apa twainge tutatira twotumiseve. Kana kuri kutetepa uku kungorega kukutsanangura ndiko kungatova nani (p.28).

(Anna had told Winnie's mother that if she wanted her daughter to survive she was supposed to eat many nutritious foods. Since this woman came from a poor household in the reserves she was not able to give her child the nutritious food that the nursing sister had prescribed. Even though the child did not die she grew up as a weakling. Her withered nature made her to grow at a very slow pace as compared to her mates; she was able to crawl whilst the children in her age group were already standing. When she was able to stand and walk very slowly like a chameleon, her age mates were already running. Thus she grew up as an atrophied child; she was like a calf which had lost its mother at birth. Her legs were very thin like arrows. As for her thin stature it is better not to further describe it).

Tsodzo through Winnie demonstrates that the black families in the reserves could not grow food crops to feed their families. Winnie could not get the food that had vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates and fats that would make her grow into a healthy child (p. 23). Her parents had been impoverished to the point where they failed to grow the basic vegetables and cereals to feed their family.

It is therefore not surprising that Winnie grows into a malnourished and weakly child compared to her age mates. Colonialism through the establishment of new forms of land ownership like the mission stations, farms and urban areas deprived black men and women of

their fertile areas and forced them into barren areas. Even though Tsodzo does not explicitly state this dispossession of land, from a critical reading of the novel one can decipher this land alienation that permeates his novel which is hidden in the language used in order to evade censorship. He discusses land alienation in general and not by gender, this is explained by the type of ownership in African traditional culture which does not discriminate by gender. Instead both genders rely on each other in accessing land. It is therefore laid bare that once the general African population has been dispossessed it includes both men and women. The women work together with their men, suffer in the urban areas because they no longer have land; and those who remain in the reserves like Winnie's mother they also suffer the consequences of land alienation together with the men who have remained in the reserves.

The poverty of black men and women in colonial reserves was induced by the new system of land ownership. Pearson and Pearson (1977 cited in Vengeyi, 2015: 128) have also observed that colonialism was the genesis of African poverty. They state that: "Africans were driven to disease-infested areas where the soils are poor and rainfall patterns unpredictable. It is a known fact that colonial land dispossessions were the root cause of poverty in southern Africa." Thus Winnie Nhamo's parents' poor status is colonially induced that is why they are now living in barren areas where they cannot grow any crops to feed their family. The dispossession of the Nhamo family signifies the general dispossession of land that occurred amongst Africans who were forced to move to areas that were barren and could not sustain any meaningful production of crops. This resulted in half-starved children like Winnie. Thus Tsodzo through characters set in a colonial environment is able to present the effects of the colonial legislations on dispossessed African families. Africans, both men and women, who have been alienated from their land fail to raise well-fed children because they no longer have the land which was the basic pillar of their livelihood.

The reserves like Sadzajena are areas where nobody intends to live because there is nothing that can be grown there. Timoti Rugare, Josiah Rugare's brother now lives on a farm where he works. Despite the challenges that blacks face on the farm and the colonial brutality that they experience there on a daily basis Timoti outrightly states that he never wants to stay in the reserves again. Timoti now plays the guitar on the farm and each time he visits the reserves he plays his guitar singing, "*Pandakasvikoti kumurungu 'Bhasa ndifuna musebenzo.'*"

Zvikanzi, 'Hini musebenzo?' Ndikati 'Zonke nkosi.' Ndokupiwa zonke basa. Ndichishanda zonke sikati; Pamwedzi pondo nechumi. Chikafu chiri chomuRungu. 'Handichadzoka ini shuwa. Zveruzevha handichazvida. Hela tondosangana kumakore mhai' (p. 36). (When I said to the white man "Boss I need employment." He said "What kind of employment?" I said any type of work my Lord.' And I was given any type of work. Working all day without any rest. I am given 3 pounds per month. Food is provided by the white man. 'I swear will not come back. I no longer like life in the reserves. Hela we will meet in heaven my mother'"). Through this song Timoti amply demonstrates that he earns such a meagre wages at the farm where he works but he prefers staying there to coming back to the reserves where there is nothing for him there. He also states that as a black man on a colonial farm, he has no job description; he does any job that the white farmer deems necessary. Timoti swears that he would meet his mother in heaven which signifies that he would not come to live in the reserves again during his life time; he would rather meet his mother in heaven, after death. Thus the reserves are so bleak such that no one wants to live there; those who remain in the reserves have no choice. People like Timoti would rather live on the farm where he is guaranteed of a meal every day that is provided by the white settler farmer. Thus dispossessed African men and women are unable make concrete choices but the system has enslaved them, it has deprived them of their land, and even the dignity to live with their families, it has been taken away as well as their African identity.

To further support that the colonial establishment of the mission station just like the farm has also forced indigenous African men and women into reserves where there is nothing for them to eat Tsodzo presents a picture of the suffering that dispossessed blacks go through because they have no food. He states that, "*Kwese kwese nzara yakanga yogara navanhu mudzimba. Mumatura ndiyoyakanga yatsiva mbesanwa. Ndiyozye yaibvira somoto muzvoto ichitutuma sengoto mudzihari. Payakazonhanhira pfungwa nomoyo ndipo payakazopiwa zita rokuti shangwa navanhu*" (24). (All over the area there was starvation in all the homesteads. In the granaries hunger had replaced harvested cereals. It was also like fire burning in every kitchen and had even replaced beer in drinking troughs. When it affected people's minds that is when they called it real poverty). Colonial establishments had condemned Africans to areas they could not grow crops, they could only produce a few drought resistant crops like millet and sorghum which they used for brewing beer in these reserves that were created by colonialism and its agents like Christianity.

The colonial establishment has not only dispossessed black men and women of land in the rural areas but in urban areas as well where blacks lack freedom. Tsodzo has brought out another form of land alienation, the urban setting in which indigenous people live in areas that are unfit for human habitation. Through Rudo's movement into the urban space in Gwelo, Tsodzo brings out clearly the challenges that dispossessed African men and women are going through in this colonial establishment which is alien to them. The city does not provide the comfort of home that Rudo has grown to know at the mission station. Her boyfriend, Joe lives in the kitchen of Mr Masango's rented house. Joe cannot afford to rent his own house but can only live in a one room in another man's rented house. The room that Joe stays in is not fit for human habitation. The walls are dreary and unpainted, the bed is infested with bugs; and Rudo equates it to a cave for she says on the night of her first visit to Joe's house, "*Asi muno murukisheni muna makomo kani? ... Kuda ndatadza kunyatsoona, ndaona setiri mubako ndikati regai ndibvunze*" (p. 74). (Does this location have mountains? ... Maybe I did not see properly but it seems like we are in a cave that is why I encouraged myself to ask). The analogy of mountains and caves signify that dispossessed black people's place of abode that is in tandem with animal habitation, not fit for human occupancy. Africans live in such houses because they are racially marginalised, poor, and live in designated black townships whose houses are not properly built.

Mr and Mrs Masango live in rented accommodation because as a black couple in colonial Rhodesia that has been dispossessed of land and does not have good jobs cannot afford to buy their own house. Mr and Mrs Masango are a very odd couple who are supposed to represent maturity and sanity but they do not. Instead they are entangled in the confusion that happens in the city, they attack the church, both husband and wife and are bitter because they have lost their land. They also rent out the kitchen of their rented house to Josiah Rugare. Similarly, Phainos Kamunda does not have a house of his own in urban Gwelo. He also rents a room at some house and where he lives the yard is fenced and guarded by a weakly dog replicating the white men's form of ownership. Fencing the area symbolises private ownership of land and not the communal one. The urban set up has brought in some new form of ownership of land, in order for one to own a house they should have title deeds which

symbolised private ownership of land and not the communal one which was prevalent in traditional Shona society.

Furthermore, the city has no room for both the African man and woman. However, it seems better for the African man who could work as garden boys for the white families. Notwithstanding, white women did not want black women in the cities for they feared that they would engage in sexual relations with the white man (Schmidt, 1992). The domestic servant job in white men's houses which was easily available for women was not accessible to black women because white women feared that the indigenous women would have illicit sexual relations with their men. Thus the urban space has no room for women, it has no jobs for them, and white women would prefer black male domestic servants for the reasons cited earlier. This resulted in black women who would have moved to urban areas to resort to selling their bodies, there was nothing for them in the reserves, the land was barren, and in the urban areas they were still not as fortunate as their male counterparts. Thus the city deprived black people of their land, the urban area itself was built on expropriated fertile land which left indigenous people hopeless with barren areas that were not fit for the growing of crops and human habitation.

In contrast, whites in urban areas have very big houses and live in low density suburbs. When Josiah Rugare first comes to the city he works as a gardener at a white person's house where the house is big, opulent and secure but Josiah lives in the servant's quarters (pp. 37-39). The opulence of Josiah's employer's house can be contrasted with Masango's house where Josiah now lives with Rudo. It can also be contrasted with the single room which accommodates so many people that Rudo sees on her first day on her way to the beerhall in search of her husband (p.4). Black families live in abject poverty in urban areas because the urban area just like the farm and the mission station are colonial establishments that drive the capitalist economy. Blacks in urban areas are only there to provide cheap labour to propel the capitalist economy; the urban centre is not regarded a permanent home for the black person, the black person's home is now the newly established and overcrowded native reserves or Tribal Trust Lands which are not fit for human habitation. Rudo since she grew up in the serene environment of Reverend Lovedale's house at Mharapara mission is shocked to see why black people live in such deplorable conditions. She is so naive about the realities of

colonialism and wonders why black people do not spruce up their houses to make them better. The owners are evidently detached from their houses since they are temporary often linked to a person's tenure at the work station. To show that blacks do not own the houses in urban areas Mrs Masango says to Rudo *"Dzimba dzavo! Hadzisi dzavo chaidzo...Vanongowanawo dzakadaro, vosiya dzakadaro. Chinovashayisa mazano okunadzira dzimba dzavo ndechekuti havazivi kuti vanokwanisa kugara madziri nguva yakadini. Mari ndiyo hoko yokugara mutawindi, zvino mari yacho ndiyo isingamuki"* (p. 5). (Their houses! These are not their own houses...They find them in that dilapidated state and also leave them like that. What takes away the energy of sprucing up the houses is that they are actually unsure about the duration of their stay in those houses. Money determines your tenure in the urban areas and difficult to come by in urban areas). Once one fails to raise the money to pay for the houses they leave for the reserves.

Through Mrs Masango's short lecture to Rudo, Tsodzo depicts the picture of homelessness among black men and women in urban areas. These indigenous people have been dispossessed of their land. They seek employment in urban areas so that they can earn a living but there is no permanent accommodation for black people in urban areas. They only live in rented accommodation which is in a dilapidated state such that one wonders why they have to endure to live under such conditions. Rudo after growing up in the confinement of Reverend Lovedale's opulent house fails to comprehend why mature and reasonable black people continue to live in those dilapidated houses. Mrs Masango's short lecture brings to the fore the fact that both black men and women are suffering the effects of colonial land dispossession.

History supports that blacks were unwanted in urban centres, there were some areas that black presence was prohibited, areas like First Street in Harare was a designated white area and no blacks could set their foot in that street. This amply demonstrates how the colonial establishment dispossessed blacks and barred them from entering certain areas in urban spaces. Black people's stay in urban areas just like on the farms is not permanent they are there just to provide cheap labour after which their services are no longer needed they move back to the rural space, the native reserves. Historians argue that the colonial establishment of urban areas was not meant for whole families. Instead the women were supposed to remain

on the countryside to supplement the capitalist economy by being peasant farmers in the barren native reserves (Schmidt, 1992).

Coupled with poor accommodation for blacks in urban centres, is the fact that the poor accommodation is inadequate. The new area of abode for black men and women dehumanises them and strips them of the dignity and human identity they formerly enjoyed. Tsodzo clearly captures this new place of abode for dispossessed black men and women in colonial urban establishments where he says:

Aitaura ega nokuti Rudo akanga asara akayeva imwe imba yakanga izere nevanhu sebhazi. Akaona sokuti vanhu ava vakanga vava kugadzirira kurara nokuti vakanga vari kuwaridza. Mukadzi mukuru aiwaridza mubhedha, vanakomana vachiwaridza pasi pomubhedha. Avawo vanasikana vakanga vamirira kuti mwenje udzimwe vagokurura hembe vorara pakati pemba. Pano mumwe mubhedha pakanga pagere akanga asiri kutaura navamwe. Kuda akanga achingovawo mumwe munhu aigara mumba imomo. Sasa rakanga rakashama, nokudaro Rudo akaona zvese zvaiva mukati. Akanga ari kunakidzwa nenharo dzenhabvu dzakanga dzaitiranwa mumba umu apo asvikobatwa ruoko nomumwe wake kuti vaende” (p. 4).

(She was talking to herself because Rudo had remained standing looking at one house which had so many people as if they were on a bus. She saw that these people were preparing to go to bed. An elderly woman was preparing the bed while boys were preparing to sleep under that bed. On the other hand girls were waiting for the lights to go off so that they could take off their clothes and sleep on the floor in the middle of the room. On another bed in the same room there was someone seated, and this other person was not talking to the other occupants of that room. Maybe it was someone else not related to that family who also lived in the same room. The door was open hence Rudo was able to see everything that took place in that room. Rudo was mesmerised by the soccer discussion that took place in that room when Mrs Masango had to come back, took her hand and led her along their way).

Tsodzo gives a very grave image of how dispossessed black families live in urban areas. The image of a whole family sleeping in one room, boys under the bed, girls on the free ground floor between two beds, parents on the bed and also a stranger on a separate bed in the same room. Through this image of an overcrowded room of people whose relationship is considered taboo to be sharing a room in the traditional African culture, Tsodzo demonstrates how blacks in urban areas have been stripped of their dignity. This explains why parents sleep in the same room with their sons, daughters and even strangers because they could not afford decent accommodation. The colonial set up has reduced the African family to such

very dehumanising conditions. Through this image Tsodzo portrays how colonialism has deprived Africans of their dignity, how could parents sleep in the same room with their children, boys and girls for that matter plus an additional stranger? In traditional Shona culture boys and girls had their own different huts where they could sleep and be free to discuss issues that concerned them; they would never sleep in the same room with their parents. To make matters even worse this room also accommodates a stranger who sleeps on the other bed. This adequately exhibits how land expropriation has deprived indigenous men and women of their dignity for such things were unheard of in a traditional African set up.

Tsodzo also portrays blacks who have realised the complicity of Christianity with colonialism in alienating the indigenous men and women from their land. These few blacks in Tsodzo's novel started as Christians but later on left after realising that there was nothing to benefit from this hypocritical religion which preaches docility on one hand, but simultaneously alienating people from their own land. Tsodzo does this through Mr and Mrs Masango who are presented as devout Christians whilst they are still in the reserves. It is Mr Masango who gives the sermon at Annatoria Tichafa's funeral (p. 26). Thus the couple was initially Christian but after realising that their lives are not improving at all under this seeming new lease of life which was given to them by Christianity, they abandon the church and become full time drunkards who go to the beer hall to enjoy themselves. At the beerhall they mock Christianity through the sermons delivered there. The type of behaviour that Masango and wife display exhibit some kind of a nervous breakdown among Africans who have failed to improve their lives through Christianity. Instead they turn to drinking beer on a full time basis in the beer halls. The beer halls were purposefully put by the colonial masters as a strategic way of distracting the indigenous people from land dispossession; and make them focus on beer drinking during their spare time. Tsodzo says of these Africans who have finally realised that Christianity did not have the capacity to give them a new life:

Yaiva tsika yezvidhakwa zvomubhawa iri kuti kana zvadhakwa zvoimba nziyo dzesvondo nekuparidza vhangeri redororo ... 'Taipinda svondo tisati taona chiedza. Musvondo taiparidza tichidzivisa vanhu kudya nyika rutivi vachiri vapenyu sezvo vaizonotsva kune chimwe chinzvimbo chataiti chinogara Satani fanika takambenge taendako tikadzoka. Takanga tichiri kuruzevha izvozvo. Zvatakazouya muno mudhorobha takadzidziswa kupinda svondo chaiyo navaMutapa' (pp. 7-8).

It was the habit of the drunkards who frequented this beer hall whenever they were drunk; that they would sing church songs and preach the gospel of beer... 'We used to

go to church before being enlightened. In church we used to preach preventing people to enjoy themselves in this world whilst they are still alive. We used to preach that they would burn in hell where Satan resides as if we had ever been to hell and back in order for us to attest to what happens there. We went to church whilst we were still living in the reserves. Since we came into the urban areas we were re-taught to go to the real church by Mr Mutapa).

This amply demonstrates that the dispossessed African men and women who live close to mission stations like Mharapara Mission imbibed Christian values and never saw the evils of Christianity which also took away their land. Mr Masango's movement to Gwelo also makes him realise that there is nothing to be gained from following Christian values, together with his wife they turn to beer drinking. It is not only this couple which used to be devout Christians in the reserves, but most patrons of this beer hall have been Christians at one point of their lives. They are able to sing church songs and to preach because they were once devout Christians who believed in the teachings of the missionaries. Ironically, their movement to the urban space 'enlightens' them and they begin to see the world differently. They have given up on Christian values because they have finally realised that the church has nothing to offer them in order for them to improve their livelihoods. Instead it is working together with colonialism in dispossessing them of their land.

Tsodzo, through Phainos Kamunda and the seemingly desire of most of his characters to acquire western education demonstrates how the colonial government used western education as a disempowerment tool. Western education was meant to divert indigenous men and women from more important things like regaining their land. Black men and women aspired to work in white collar jobs, leaving out the land which was the economy. Indigenous people were made to look down upon Agriculture as a subject and yet it is the backbone of the economy in agro-based communities like Zimbabwe. Relegating Agriculture and making it a seemingly useless and dirty trade was meant to dissuade indigenous men and women from noticing the importance of the land that had been taken away from them. Thus most respondents who were interviewed demonstrated that when they were growing up they desired to get western education which would be their passport to leaving such demeaning, strenuous and dirty sector like agriculture. They took western education as a ticket for a better and well-paying job in the city. Whites through western education had brainwashed black people not to see the importance of agricultural land, they had been blinkered like horses and

could not see beyond what was being taught to them. The demeaning of agriculture therefore made the black people to focus on trivial issues at the expense of regaining back their land which had been expropriated from them. The importance of agriculture in agro-based societies like Zimbabwe has only been emphasised in post-independence Zimbabwe in which the people's energies have been redirected to become real farmers.

Tsodzo's *Pafunge* just like Chakaipa's *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* has managed to depict the consequences of the alienation of the indigenous people's land in a colonial context. The author has masked his story under religious satire such that his novel could evade the austere censorship of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau which did not allow non-conformist literature to be published during the colonial period. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to critique Tsodzo's social vision in the novel.

5.4.3.1 A Critique of Tsodzo's Social Vision in *Pafunge*

Tsodzo in his novel *Pafunge* does not give the African people both men and women the agency to take charge of their destiny. The dispossessed black people in his novel wallow in poverty in the reserves, urban areas and also on the farms. The urban space just like the farm is presented as a place of escape for the landless Zimbabweans, both men and women but Tsodzo amply demonstrates that it has its own fair share of problems. It looks like the dispossessed indigenous people have come to accept the new colonial establishment which has dispossessed them of their prime land. The black men and women in Tsodzo's *Pafunge* have no means of extricating themselves from the marginalisation of land that the mission station and other colonial establishments have condemned them to. This is a misrepresentation of history on how the black people reacted to land dispossessions. They showed some disgruntlement with such a set up and eventually took up arms to fight the oppressors and regain their land. According to Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity, people of African descent, both men and women are at the centre of charting out their history but Tsodzo's characters seem to show that forms of discontentment are beginning to simmer through the church sermons in the beer hall. Thus Tsodzo only manages to show the effects of the colonial legislations on the black people's land but does not offer solutions on how black people can resolve such problems. Literature should not only narrate problems but should have gone a step further to proffer solutions to the problems faced in people's lives. It

deals with the sensitive issues of societies, and the land dispossession is a sensitive issue in black people's lives. As an author Tsodzo should have used the same metaphors and symbols he used to depict land dispossession to demonstrate that black people are not docile but they have ways of demonstrating their disgruntlement and made efforts to regain their land which had been taken away from them by the colonial masters.

Moreso, despite clearly presenting the effects of dispossession in his novel and trying to evade the strict Literature Bureau from preventing his novel from being published Tsodzo like Chakaipa sometimes overdid it in his portrayal of the naive temperament of his Christian characters. The way Annatoria Tichafa is made to drink alcohol by Josiah Rugare and how she gives in to her boyfriend's sexual advances is too simplistic (p. 18). To add to this, Rudo's naivety in not knowing that there are people who suffer in urban areas, who do not have accommodation is too simplistic for a person who has received post primary education (p. 4). Rudo also takes Josiah Rugare at face value without questioning his character or researching on her boyfriend from people who came from Gweru. She is too naive not to want to hear anything about the insincerity her so-called boyfriend-cum-father, Josiah Rugare. When some of her schoolmates try to warn her that her boyfriend is not a clergy but a criminal who lives through unscrupulous means in Gwelo, Rudo gets angry on such people. She dismisses them and never sits down on her own to ponder on such issues and research on her own to get the truth of the matter (pp. 68-69). More often than not when young people are in love they do a little bit of some research about their partners and not to blindly follow them as does Rudo.

Furthermore, Tsodzo also presents the mission station as too protective to the extent that Rudo fails to understand what happens in the real world. Even the two years she spends at Mudavanhu Boarding School have no effect on preparing Rudo for the harsh environment of the world outside the mission station. Chiwome has also observed the over-protective nature of the mission station and argues that:

The mission is comfortable in material terms, but does not have all the functionalities that would be found in a stable Shona extended family. It tries to be the light of the earth but keeps its converts in darkness about the socio-historical origins of their fate which lies outside the church (Chiwome, 1996: 112)

Tsodzo overdid this over protective nature of the mission station in a bid to conceal the more serious subject of land. The fact that Rudo is also impregnated by her father has made some scholars to condemn Tsodzo's *Pafunge* as being designed after the Greek tragedy *Oedipus Rex* (Chiwome, 1996). In a bid to conceal his political agenda, Tsodzo borrows heavily from the Greek tragedy instead of his work being influenced by the cultural environment from which it emerges.

Moreover, despite the church having expropriated the African people's land and also having failed dismally in the first place in preparing both Rudo and her mother in facing life's real challenges, Tsodzo depicts it as the solution for all African social problems. Annatoria was a devout Christian who is duped by her boyfriend Josiah Rugare. He impregnates her and denies responsibility. As a result of the shame that she has failed to live up to the expected Christian values, Annatoria commits suicide (p. 25). The church as an institution has dispossessed blacks of their land and has also failed to give solutions to Annatoria Tichafa's problems which could easily be handled in an African extended family. Similarly, Rudo grows up under the guardianship of Rev Lovedale but still the church has not prepared her to face the cruel world which is represented by Josiah Rugare. Despite the church's failure in resolving these social problems for Rudo and her mother and successfully dispossessing blacks of their land, Tsodzo still gives it as the solution for resolving the social problems that African people encounter. The day that Rudo's case goes to court Reverend Lovedale and her childhood friend, Winnie come to witness the proceedings. Rudo is fortunate and escapes a jail sentence (p. 113). After the court session and Rudo is set free she goes back to the confines of the mission station for Tsodzo says:

Vakati vasvika vakapinda mumba mamufundisi Lovedale, ndokusvikogara mumupanda wokutandarira, muya makanga makagara Mufundisi naRudo musi wakaoneka Rudo achiti aienda kumurume wake akanga amupa pamuviri...Mufundisi Lovedale vakamboshaya kuti votanga kutaura vachiti chii kuna Rudo pamusana pokufarira kuti mwana wavo akanga apunyuka mumukanwa mamupere... 'Hazvinei, ndinovimba kuti iko wavakuziva zvizhinji nezvevanhu. Saka ndichanamata kuti uwanikwe nomukomana anovimbika, wechiKrsitsu sezvakanyorwa mutsamba yamai vako (p. 114).

When they got to Reverend Lovedale's house they all sat in the lounge, the room in which Rudo sat on the day that she left Mharapara Mission and eloped to her husband who was responsible for her pregnancy... Reverend Lovedale was at first short of words as to what to say to Rudo because of the joy he had for receiving back his daughter who had escaped from difficult circumstances... 'It does not matter, I believe

that right now you have learnt a lot about life and people. So I will pray for you so that you can get married by a Christian husband as your mother wished in her letter’)

Tsodzo presents the church which has failed to provide guidance to Rudo in the first place as the solution to her problems. Rudo takes refuge again in the church which has failed to guide her in the first place. Thus in trying to evade the critical eye of the Literature Bureau, Tsodzo gives a warped presentation of the role of the church in resolving the problems that Africans encounter in their social lives. Tsodzo overdid his portrayal of the church in resolving social problems at the expense of its colonial mission to dispossess blacks of their land.

Also, the novel does not explicitly link challenges that black men and women face due to colonial land dispossession but brackets both men and women in the same category without clearly distinguishing how men and women were affected differently as distinct social groups by the colonial land legislations. It will need a critical eye to decipher the effects of colonial legislations on gender and land ownership. This has also been observed by some respondents who stated that:

The Shona novel has not been convincing in giving a satisfactory historical analysis surrounding the issue to do with gender and land ownership. Most of the works give a parsimonious description of the relationship between gender and land issues in Zimbabwe. The authors are oblivious to the cultural and historical factors that have created the inequalities in gender and land ownership. For example, *Pafunge* does not clearly handle gender and land ownership in a very convincing manner (Field Notes, April, 2016).

Tsodzo falls into the same trap as his contemporary authors who published during the colonial period and had to conceal such subversive literature in their works of art. Condemning these authors would be doing them gross injustice because they had to find ways of presenting their work without it being subversive to the colonial government of the day.

Despite the stated shortcomings of Tsodzo’s social vision, he should, like Mutswairo and Chakaipa, be applauded for effectively obscuring the alienation of the black people’s land through colonial establishments of a mission station, an urban centre and a farm in his religious satire. If he had gallantly presented the novel as one of the expropriation of the

indigenous people's land by white colonial settlers his novel would not have passed through the strict censorship of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. Critics of literature therefore should not be quick to dismiss works of art like *Pafunge* as a religious or moral satire which has nothing to do with gender and land issues without understanding the social environment that produced such works of art. Such a conclusion can only be reached through a surface reading of the novel. An analytical critique of the novel would however reveal its multifaceted plot of the consequences of colonial legislations and dispossession of black men and women's land. The novel, though not giving the indigenous people the agency to chart their own destiny, amply presents how mission stations, urban areas and farms that have restructured the Rhodesian landscape into native reserves and in the process redefined the indigenous people's new relationship with the land (Magosvongwe, 2013). Africans, both male and female were now marginalised from their land by this new colonial dispensation which is simultaneously working with agents like Christianity. Black people, both men and women have been deprived of the fertile land to grow crops. Thus the African has consequently become a foreigner in his/her land of birth. S/he no longer enjoys the benefits of his/her ancestral land which is now being enjoyed by the colonial master in the guise of missionaries and urban dwellers.

5.4.4 A Summary of the Selected Fictional Works on the Effects of Colonial Legislations on Gender and Land Ownership

The preceding sections have amply demonstrated how selected fictional works depict the effects of colonial legislations on gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean history. *Feso*, *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* and *Pafunge* were published during the colonial period and could not confidently discuss land dispossession in colonial Rhodesia. Taking such a stance would have resulted in the novels being regarded as subversive literature and would have never been published. Discussing land issues was considered political (Chiwome, 1996, 2002). Thus the authors had to use their literary prowess to conceal land issues in an allegory, excessive beer drinking and religious satire to capture land alienation of black men and women, and to present the different gender roles in relationship to land in a colonial set up. Through the use of metaphors, symbols and literary images the selected authors were able to discuss how colonial legislations resulted in the dispossession of land among black people, both men and women were alienated from the land they formerly enjoyed. Using such literary devices made the works of art see the light of day for their land dispossession message was

not easily deciphered by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. However, in the case of *Feso* the Literature Bureau later realised that the novel was on land dispossession and later banned it. The succeeding section endeavours to demonstrate how black people of African descent participated in redressing the colonial racial and gender injustices of land dispossession in post independent Zimbabwe. Selected fictional works that have captured this redressing of colonial racial and gender injustices will be discussed.

5.5 Land Reform: Redressing the Colonial and Gender Injustices in Land Ownership in Post-independent Zimbabwe

As has been clearly highlighted in chapter two, Zimbabwe inherited a racially distorted land ownership pattern which favoured whites (Tshuma, 1997; Mafa, et. al. 2015). As a way of redressing these injustices in land ownership the dispossessed Zimbabweans took up arms and fought the colonial regime in order to regain back their land. The main goal of waging the Chimurenga wars (liberation struggles) from 1896 right up to 1980 when the country finally got its independence was to regain back the fertile land which had been taken away by the colonial masters (Magosvongwe, 2013; Mafa, et. al. 2015). The fact that land was the main reason for waging the liberation struggle is also attested by Baxter (2010: 512) who argues that “Politically, land was the root of the Chimurenga just as it had been in 1896, and its potent issue had never been off the agenda since the imbalance of land distribution would keep the revolution alive and the enemy more or less unchanged.” To this effect Sadomba affirms that Smith lost the war because all the participants of the liberation struggle including the war veterans viewed land as a critical component of their lives. After independence in 1980, the veterans of the struggle expected to get land which they had fought for (Sadomba, 2008, 2011). Redressing the imbalances in land ownership was at the top of the agenda for those who had participated in the liberation struggle especially the peasants and the war veterans.

Despite the fact that redressing the colonial racial and gender imbalances in land ownership was a top priority of peasants, after independence the newly independent state followed a policy of reconciliation in which it forgave all its foes and befriended them. The imbalance in land ownership by race and gender had not been redressed. Concerning reconciliation Mazuruse (2010: 32) argues that:

In his inaugural address on Independence Day in 1980 the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe stunned the whole nation by declaring reconciliation as the cornerstone of his government's policy in the new Zimbabwe. Reconciliation offered constitutional safeguard for white settlers ensuring that they retained their elitist place in the new Zimbabwean state.

Instead of focusing on redressing the racial and gender imbalances in land ownership, which was the main driving factor in waging the liberation struggle, the new government set that aside through this new policy. The imbalance in land ownership by race and gender which had not been redressed was side stepped in a bid to protect white private property. Chung also concurs with Mazuruse and avers that the post-independent government through reconciliation "made a lot of noise about the rights of white farmers but no attention was paid to the rights of poor peasants who wanted to regain the land that had been taken away from them by colonial settlers" (Chung, 2006: 98). This baffled the peasants who had learnt during the second Chimurenga war which finally ushered in Zimbabwe's independence that the main purpose of the struggle was to regain the dispossessed land. They had been made to believe through the *pungwe* meetings and war propaganda that they were going to take the white man's farms soon after independence (Kriger, 1992; Makaudze, 2009; Chigidi, 2009, Viriri, 2013). This was because the white settlers had dispossessed black people of their fertile land as has been exemplified in the previous sections.

As has been clearly indicated in chapter two, the government could not implement the land reform exercise at a very high speed as was expected by the general populace that had suffered these land dispossessions for a very long time. Its hands were tied by the dictates of the Lancaster House constitution which ushered in Zimbabwe's independence. As affirmed earlier on in chapter two, the Lancaster House Constitution respected private property (Moyana, 2002; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Consequently, this meant that the white colonial farms that black men and women so much desired to take were out of reach. In addition, the Lancaster House Constitution stated that the constitution was not supposed to be tampered with for a period of 10 years (Tshuma, 1997; Moyana, 2002, Chung, 2006; Mafa, et. al. 2015).

Magosvongwe (2009: 85) has also noted the failure of the Lancaster House Constitution in redressing the historical racial and gender imbalances in land ownership. She argues that:

The Lancaster House Constitution upheld the privileges of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act and the Land Tenure Act of 1969, yet these had to go if the new government was to make any meaningful strides in redressing the colonial land imbalances.

Such colonial legislations that continued to operate in independent Zimbabwe left the peasants with no option but to immediately seize land in order to redress the colonially induced racial and gender discrepancies in land ownership as exemplified in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* (1985) and *Vavariro* (1990).

The newly independent government did not take drastic measures like forcibly seizing the land as was advocated during *pungwe* meetings. Instead with its policy of reconciliation and the dictates of the Lancaster House constitution, the government followed laid down procedures in acquiring land that had been taken away by whites (Chung, 2006; Mazuruse, 2010; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Additionally, in the new dispensation the white farmers were protected by the new government which respected private property as enshrined in the new constitution drafted and agreed at Lancaster House in London, and this is the constitution which governed Zimbabwe back then. The government would therefore through law enforcement agents like the police make sure that it protected private property, and farms owned by white farmers were protected by the Lancaster House Constitution.

Furthermore, land redistribution or land reform was supposed to be guided by the World Bank policy of willing seller willing buyer. The willing sellers were the white farmers who would initially sell land they were under-utilising to the willing buyer, the government of Zimbabwe (Tshuma, 1997; Mafa, et. al. 2015). In the World Bank guided land reform the willing buyer was the government of Zimbabwe which would buy the underutilised land that was made available on the market for the purpose of resettling landless people. The state paid the willing seller an equivalence of the value of the land on the market. The state in Zimbabwe was also granted the first refusal on all land sales (Lahiff, 2005; Moyo & Yeros, 2005). The government would then buy this land in the required foreign currency of the white willing seller and then redistribute the acquired land to the landless peasants. The willing buyer willing seller focused on redressing racial imbalances and sidelined gender justice in land redistribution.

The process took long such that by 1985, five years after attaining independence the government of Zimbabwe had not yet acquired enough land for redistribution. The dispossessed black peasants became impatient and were agitated; they misunderstood the reasons why land they had fought for could not be easily repossessed. Also to be noted is the fact that the white farmers who sold land to the government under the willing seller willing buyer policy sold land that was undesirable to them; land that was lying idle and predominantly infertile. Consequently, under this policy, the government did not get fertile land as happened in the second phase of the land reform programme (Mafa, et. al. 2015). Furthermore, the World Bank guided land reform programme did not focus on gender justice but on redressing colonial racial injustice. It is against this backdrop that the fictional works like *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* and *Vavariro* should be understood.

After the period of the expiration of the Lancaster House Constitution in 1990, still no meaningful land reform had taken place. Sachikonye (2003: 230) avers that “by 1997, only 71 000 households had been resettled on 3.6 million hectares of land which was a far cry from the target of 162 000 households.” Resettling only a small number of what was initially anticipated demonstrates the slow pace at which the government-sponsored land reform programme was moving. Commenting on the nature of the first phase of the land reform programme Mupondi affirms that: “Efforts made by the ZANU PF government in the 1980s and 1990s to resettle people were commendable but insufficient to meet the growing need for land from the people” (Mupondi, 2015: 185). This amply demonstrates that the land reform process based on the World Bank guided government policy of willing seller willing buyer was moving at a snail’s pace and left a lot of people disgruntled since they remained in the barren reserves several years after independence. This resulted in disgruntled peasants who had to take it upon themselves to redistribute former white farms among themselves. Hence in the early years of independence that the government followed to the latter the dictates of the Lancaster House Constitution evicted hungry peasants, both male and female who occupied farms as depicted in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* and *Vavariro*.

After the expiration of the ten year period enshrined in the Lancaster House Constitution, the government of Zimbabwe started to make some changes on how the land issue would be handled. Soon after independence in 1982, the government had passed the Communal Areas Act which took away the power to allocate land from traditional leaders (Dande & Mujere, 2015). Additionally, through this same Act, the government “kept farms and resettlement areas out of the legal reach of traditional leaders” (Dande & Mujere, 2015: 252). Thus from 1980 to 1990 the government wholeheartedly followed the Lancaster House Constitution willing buyer willing seller policy but abandoned this policy in post 1990 (Moyo, 1995). After the expiration of the Lancaster House Constitution which advocated for the protection of private property rights, the Government of Zimbabwe began to use other methods of land acquisition like expropriation and finally radical seizure with minimal or no compensation (Moyo & Yeros, 2005). It abandoned this policy because towards the end of the 1990s the government failed to successfully renegotiate British support on land reform with the latter discontinuing payment in 1998. The Government of Zimbabwe then had to regulate compulsory acquisition by putting new laws like the “Land Acquisition Act of 1992 which was used to quieten landless people” (Moyo, 1995b, Moyo, 2001; Moyo, 2006). In 1996 the “Land Acquisition Act gave the president powers to compulsorily acquire and allocate land, and the Act began to be implemented on a massive scale in late 1997” (Dande & Mujere, 2015: 253). Furthermore, in January 1998 the government passed the Traditional Leaders Act which “restored back to the chiefs the power to allocate land” (Dande & Mujere, 2015: 253). It is against the backdrop of such legal Acts and the slow pace of land reform that in 1998, chief Svosve led his people and occupied farms near Marondera as a way of demonstrating the peasants’ need to have land and the fact that the government was too slow to implement land redistribution (Moyo & Yeros, 2005; Mazuruse, 2010).

In 1998 the government called for a Donor’s Conference and on the eve of the conference there were some spontaneous land occupations throughout the country (Moyo & Yeros, 2005). The government wanted to arm twist donors to agree to further funding the land reform process through these spontaneous land occupations but the truth of the matter is that it had no way of refraining the peasants from occupying farms because it was of the peasants’ making and was not directed by the government (Moyo & Yeros, 2005). The Donors’ Conference therefore did not yield much in terms of funding to support land reform and the government had to carry on with compulsory and market acquisition as well as other

complementary approaches (Moyo & Yeros, 2005). After the conference the donors vowed not to give Zimbabwe any financial aid to support the land reform process but only offered humanitarian aid.

It is against this background that the government had to further modify the Land Acquisition Act in 2000 and passed the 2001 Rural Land Occupiers Act which protected new occupants from evictions by the previous land owners (Moyo & Yeros, 2005). This new law therefore protected people like chief Svosve who had occupied white men's farms. There were no more evictions because the new settlers were now protected by these new laws. Moreso, the referendum on the new constitution which was resoundingly rejected by the general populace in February 2000 was an eye opener to the government that the electorate no longer had faith in them. Instead the government then used the land as a way of winning back the people's confidence and colluded with them in forcibly taking back land from the white farmers. These developments set the stage for the pace and direction of the next phase of the land reform programme.

In order to appease the electorate the government took a bold stance in July 2001 and announced the fast track acquisition of 3 041 farms unleashing a new round of occupations and confrontations with farm owners and workers (Lahiff, 2005; Gudhlanga & Chirimuuta, 2010). The announcement was followed by a massive resettlement of people on farms that the government had acquired. The government was no longer restricting itself to land that was lying unused but resettled people on both occupied and unoccupied farms (Gudhlanga & Chirimuuta, 2010). Moyo and Yeros (2005: 188) state that, "By the end of 2002 Fast Track Land Reform had compulsorily acquired some ten million hectares of land, approximately 90% of white commercial land and redistributed most of it to 127 000 households and 8000 middle capacity farmers." The government of Zimbabwe also showed renewed agricultural support for the resettled farmers. Gudhlanga & Chirimuuta (2010) argue that even some social groups who had been left out of the first land reform process like women and the poor could also access land through the FTLRP. These social groups had been left out because the government's latter strategy of resettling people was to focus on people who had agricultural expertise and could finance their own farming. It adopted such a stance after assessing how the first land reform beneficiaries were faring. The FTLRP resettled beneficiaries into A1 and

A2 models. According to Matondi and Munyuki-Hungwe (2006), A1 Model is the villagisation and A2 is for the Small Scale Commercial Farmers with experience in agriculture and credit evidence of access to capital. They further state that successful applicants for A2 Model would be given 99 year leases (Matondi & Munyuki-Hungwe, 2006). The FTLRP under the A2 model had abandoned this new strategy but had to allocate land to all irrespective of technical knowhow and gender. Under the FTLRP women could also get land in their own right and 18% of women got land under the A1 model while 12% got it under the A2 model (Mafa, et. al. 2015; Chingarande, 2004, 2008; Chingarande, Mugabe, Kujinga & Magaisa, 2013). It is against this background of FTLRP that *Sekai Minda Tave Nayow* which has vehemently addressed both racial and gender justice should be understood.

The succeeding sections discuss the various forms of land reform that the Zimbabwe government implemented in post-independence period. The first one being the willing seller willing buyer which is reflected in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* and *Vavariro* is gender blind and in which those who spontaneously occupied white farms were evicted by the government law enforcement agents. Instead they were supposed to wait to be allocated land by the government through the willing seller willing buyer policy. The second phase of the land reform which was termed the Fast Track Land Reform (FTLRP) or *jambanja* (radical seizure of land) which is depicted in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* redressed both gender and racial injustices in land ownership. The FTLRP was a clear sign of the people's failure to wait patiently for the government's slow process of land reform which was guided by market principles.

5.5.1 Early Resettlement, Disillusionment, Betrayal and Spontaneous Peasant Land Occupations in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo*

Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo is an epitome of the disillusionment and betrayal that the peasants felt after independence. From a superficial reading the play does not boldly deal with gender justice in land reform but racial injustice. It exhibits the African traditional thinking in which female ownership of land is subsumed in male ownership. However taking a critical reading and an African womanist and Afrocentric perspective of the play one can decipher gender overtones coming out of the play. In the African milieu the concept of land ownership

involves both male and female, they owned land collectively, there is no emphasis on individual ownership by gender. Once the man owns the land then the woman has also owned it and not for it to be privately owned by the woman or a man. In African traditional culture it was only through the marriage institution that men and women could both own land collectively. Men were only allocated land after getting married. The spontaneous invasions of farms by the peasants in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* did not emphasise individual ownership by gender but both husband and wife owned the newly acquired land as a family. This demonstrates the importance of the female gender in man's accessing of the land resource. Also, the type of the land reform in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* is a reflection of the general thinking of that time in which the government focused on redressing colonial imbalances at the expense of gender justice under the guidance of the Lancaster House Constitution. The World Bank guided land reform focused on giving land to families, by allocating it to household heads. Allocation of land to families did not leave out women because those men who accessed it had to be married. Thus to rightly say the play does not deal with gender issues in land will be doing gross injustice to the work.

The play demonstrates that the reason for waging the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe was for the people to regain back their land. After independence the peasants, both men and women who had jointly participated in the liberation struggle with the freedom fighters failed to realise the benefits of attaining independence. Considering what social historians like Schmidt (1992) and Mvududu (2000) have observed about peasants in an African context, that the peasant was a woman then the term peasants would refer more to women than men because it is only the women who sustained the peasant option in colonial Rhodesia since they were the actual farmers. Thus the single main goal of waging the liberation struggle was to redress the colonial racial and gender injustices in land ownership that prevailed in the country. Many historians and social critics attest to these injustices and unequal land distribution that the country inherited soon after independence and redistributing land was therefore imperative (Moyo, 1995; Magosvongwe, 2013; Mupondi, 2015; Mafa, et. al. 2015). However, the government's pace of land reform was rather too slow for peasants such that they took it upon themselves to implement the goals of the liberation struggle. This is what Aaron Chiundura Moyo (1985) clearly captures in the play *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo*. The title when loosely translated means "beating the drum with an axe." The proverb means that the peasants had taken the law unto themselves by doing something that was unheard of and

unexpected, by taking drastic measures of seizing white people's farms, they were beating the drum with an axe whilst they were seated on a spear, *kuridza ngoma nedemo wakagara papfumo* (Magosvongwe, 2013). What the peasants did, to invade farms on their own, redistributing the land which was taken away from them by the colonial masters, would lend them in trouble with the government and law enforcing agents.

Hanlon, et. al. (2013) have also noted the very slow pace at which the newly independent government of Zimbabwe handled the land reform issue. Despite the fact that regaining of land was the main goal of waging the liberation struggle the pace at which the government of Zimbabwe implemented the land reform exercise was most displeasing to those who had participated in the liberation struggle especially the peasants who had imbibed the liberation war propaganda advocated at the *pungwe* meetings. To this effect Hanlon, et. al. say, "Land may have been at the forefront for the guerillas in political speeches but the new government did not give top priority to land reform after independence" (Hanlon, et. al. 2013: 35). This according to Magosvongwe (2013) is what Aaron Chiundura Moyo endeavours to bring to the fore in his play. The failure to expeditiously handle the redistribution of land among landless peasants resulted in the spontaneous land invasions by peasants soon after independence as depicted by Moyo in his play. This is because the peasants were becoming impatient, they still believed in the doctrine that was repeatedly said at *pungwe* meetings that soon after independence the landless peasants would occupy the white man's farm, thereby redressing the historical racial and gender injustices in land ownership that the black people had suffered for so long.

The play *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* is deeply rooted in the Afrocentric and Africana Womanist paradigms. It gives the peasants the agency to redress the land imbalances instead of just being hapless victims who wait for an external force to come and assist them come out of the political quagmire that they are suffering. The peasants, both male and female take it upon themselves to change their own predicament. They do not wait for the government which is very slow in redressing the colonial injustices in land ownership both by gender and by race. The agitated and aggrieved peasants, symbolised by Tinazvo and his colleagues with their families, disagree to be footnotes in the writing of their history but are at the centre of bringing positive change in land ownership.

Moyo in his play *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* depicts that since the peasants had participated in the liberation struggle and understood well the goals of the struggle, it was only the implementation phase of the redressing of colonial imbalances in land ownership that should have immediately followed the attainment of independence. The peasants fail to comprehend why they continued to suffer in the congested communal reserves while the white man still occupied the farms they had fought for. Moyo neatly captures this through Tinazvo and a group of other peasants who immediately invade a farm soon after independence. Fulfillment of the goals of the struggle is brought out where Tinazvo says to Toro, the farm security guard who has been sent to evict them from the farm by the white farm owner:

Saka chitaurai nyaya yenyu mupedze vamupurisa. Regai kuda kutipedzera nguva yedu, Bhasi wenyu anoda kuti tibve tichienda kupiko? Ari kuziva here kuti tave muZimbabwe, nyika yave yemunhu mutema? Ari kuzviziva here izvi? Mira kupindura! Purazi rino rine mbeu chaizvo. Isu sevanhu vakarwa hondo nemabhunu aya, takafunga zvekuti titame kubva kujecha kusina mbeu tichiuya mupurazi rino rine uchi nemukaka. Ko ndizvoka zvatakafira. Kana bhasi wako akada kutibvisa pano, chokwadi pfuti dzinorira patsva. Inga mubhunu wacho achakarara dzedanda! Anoda kuita zvekuvhaira kunge zvinonzi akauya akabereka purazi rino achibva naro kuHingirandi. Rino iri ipurazi redu isu. Ko chatisina kuita pamazuva ehondo chii? Kubikira takabikira, mabara, mabhamba nezvimwe zvakadaro, zvainaya mukati medu kunge mvura yemunhuruka. Ko ndiri kunyepa here nhasi hama dzangu? (pp. 5-6)

(So tell us your story and finish Mr Policeman. Please do not waste our time, your Boss wants us to leave this farm for which place? Does he know that now we are in independent Zimbabwe which is governed by black people? Does he know all this? Wait a bit before you respond! This farm is very productive. As people who fought this liberation struggle with the white men, we decided to vacate the barren areas where nothing can grow and come to occupy this farm which flows with milk and honey. This is the reason why we fought the war. If your white boss wants to evict us from here surely we will resume fighting again. This white man has to wake up from his deep slumber for he does not seem to know that the blacks are now in charge of governing the country! He wants to behave as if he came from England carrying this farm on his back. This is our farm. What is it that we did not do during the war that entitles us to this fertile farm? We cooked for the freedom fighters; we dodged the bullets and landmines that were like rain in our villages. Am I not telling the truth today my dear comrades in arms?)

Moyo gives a picture of the peasants, both male and female as justified for taking over the land because they have duly participated in the liberation struggle. Both men and women participated by providing food, camouflage to the freedom fighters and fighting side by side

with the guerillas. His use of rhetorical questions demonstrates that peasants' failure to figure out why the government now wants to evict them from the farm they have duly occupied because they deserve it. They have assisted the freedom fighters in executing the liberation struggle and hence qualify to get this land by virtue of their role in the struggle. The freedom fighters used Mao Tse Tung, the Chinese leader's philosophy that "the people are the sea and the freedom fighters are the fish swimming in the sea" (Mao tse Tung, 1917). Thus for the liberation struggle to be successfully executed the freedom fighters were greatly assisted by the peasants, just like the fish whose power is in water, their power to fight and win the war was in the people, the peasants who fought together with them and provided the necessary support that they needed to execute the liberation struggle.

Through the image of peasants, men with their wives as signified by Tinazvo and other peasants spontaneously occupying the white man's farm in the early 1980s, Moyo captures that the peasants understood the reasons why they had fought the war, to take back their land. They understood this goal better than those in government who are not expediting the process of redistributing land to the landless people. The peasants fail to understand why they have to continue suffering in the infertile sandy areas while the white man is still enjoying ownership of fertile land after independence. Consequently, the peasants had to move away from the sandy soils and spontaneously occupy the white man's farms, fulfilling the goals of the liberation struggle of redistributing land to the black people. The peasants are not a docile lot but have the agency to correct the injustices that were perpetrated against them by the colonial regime. The peasants are not taking "a footnote position in their history" (Mazama, 2004), but are marching right in front to chart their own history. Both men and women are participating together in the concert to liberate themselves from the colonial dispossession of land (Hudson-Weems, 2007). The author is boldly advocating for the redistribution of land amongst the peasants who are heavily congested in the barren reserves which cannot sustain any meaningful production of crops.

The scandal of land ownership in post-independence Zimbabwe is highlighted by Magosvongwe and Makwavarara (2015: 48) who argue that "while the whites had vast tracts of land that lay unused, the blacks were packed and congested in barren reserves like mice." The peasants who understood the goals of the struggle could not let such a scenario to

continue prevailing in independent Zimbabwe. Hanlon, et. al. (2013) concur to the under-utilisation of land by Rhodesian farmers when they argue that “only 15 percent of potentially arable European land was being cultivated.” Furthermore, Riddell (1978) affirms that thirty percent of all Rhodesian farms were insolvent. Accordingly the peasants decide to take it upon themselves to fulfill the goals of the liberation struggle by spontaneously occupying these vast farms that white farmers could never sufficiently utilise. Though the focus is on peasants it is widely known that both genders were involved in spontaneous land occupations since most land invaders went in as families as exemplified by Tinazvo and other peasants who occupy the white man’s farm.

In an interview with one author, he argued that the reason why blacks had to wage the liberation struggle was because they wanted to regain back their land. He says:

Yes. An ordinary writer is different from the politicians and economists in the sense that he writes whatever he wants. We say a writer is like a prophet, even if the prophet is not able to write he can still prophesy, however a writer in most times is governed by his/her background, thus, his education, his environment, among others. If it is like this, it then means that he may have many themes. If you remember well when we fought the war of liberation we fought for our land. Land was so important that is why the late Joshua Nkomo used to say *umntwana womhlabathi/mwana wevhu*. But after independence we see people messing up with that same land we fought for. It is the writers’ responsibility to write about such things (Interview with an author, 3 March 2016).

Writers therefore believe that they have a social responsibility of discussing the sensitive issues of the society in which they belong. Moyo is bold enough to discuss land redistribution issues after independence because his work was not considered subversive in post-independent Zimbabwe. As a writer he believes that it is his duty to remind the government of the vital issues of land redistribution at a time when the government seemed to have forgotten the goals of the liberation struggle, to redistribute land to the landless peasants. However, in his presentation of these spontaneous land invasions he seems to be oblivious of gender justice because to him women access land through men and once men own the land they collectively own it with their wives. This is guided by the African world view in which a man is allocated land once he gets married

Furthermore, the author states that it was the publication of his work which alerted the war veterans that they could also join hands with the peasants and practically participate in the implementation of the goals of the liberation struggle of regaining dispossessed land instead of waiting for the very slow government land reform programme. To affirm this, he says:

Yes. I also talk about the land issue in my other play called *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo*. I wrote this drama long back before the land reform. I can simply say my play influenced the war veterans to claim back their land from the whites. In that play I do not use a female character only, I also use male characters. You find that there are two war veterans, the other one is from ZIPRA and the other ZANLA and the two got married. The relatives of the men, especially the father cannot tolerate a daughter-in-law whose father was a sell out during the liberation struggle. Both Shinga and Hondo insist that the war had united them and they could not be separated now. The married couple then leaves the husband's parents on the farm they had occupied. Tinazvo and his wife Rupiza are living on the farm together with other families that have participated in the land invasions. The farm occupied by the masses is owned by a white man and they send his farm security guard to tell him that when they fought the war they fought for their land. In other words Tinazvo and his wife, Rupiza were helping the government to claim the land back. In the play women and men are both fighting for their land. This play like I said was an eye opener to the government to take action and claim the land.

Through his play Moyo alludes to the slow government land resettlement programme. Even though he does not clearly agree that he writes about gender and land ownership, in the excerpt from the interview he states that both men and women represented by Tinazvo and Rupiza are assisting the government in reclaiming back the land using a faster way than its slow land resettlement programme. Hondo constantly asks his parents if they have been allocated land on the farm by the government. He says to them:

Asi hurumende yakati mugare zvenyuka?...Handizvo munofanira kugara munzvimbo dzamunenge mapihwa nehurumende. Izvozvi ndiri kutonyara chaizvo nenyaya...Handigoni kuda kukufadzai nenhema vabereki vangu. Zviri nani kuti ndikushatirisei nechokwadi. Zviri nani kuti mudzokere zvenyu kumatongo kusina ivhu racho rine mbeu kana kuri iko kwamungagone kugara zvakanaka nevamwe vose. Pano apa changosara kuti mukumbwe muchinovharirwa mujeri (pp. 44-46).

(Has the government granted you permission to stay here?.. That is not how you should go about it; you should stay in areas designated by the government. Right now am very ashamed by your actions...I cannot not make you happy by telling you lies since you are my parents. It is better for me to make you angry by telling you the truth. It is better that you go back to your old homes where there are barren soils which cannot support the growth of any crops if it is where you can stay peacefully with everybody without engaging in running battles with the police. What has only

remained here is for you to be taken by the police and be put in jail for you have illegally occupied land that does not belong to you)

Moyo vividly depicts that the ex-combatants like Hondo now believe in the government policy of acquiring land legally, not what these peasants have done. Instead the peasants should go back to their barren areas and wait for proper resettlement by the government. The reserves are the only place for peasants to stay until such a time they are allocated land by the new government, otherwise the farms still belong to the white man and the peasants should abide by such laws. Moyo, through Hondo, further highlights that failure to abide by the law and redistributing land to themselves, the peasants will surely one day be evicted and arrested by the police for what they are doing is illegal. Moyo, through the peasants' actions, further brings to the fore the fact that the land redistribution exercise has not yet taken off that is why the peasants take it upon themselves to redistribute land. They cannot continue waiting for the government which seems to have forgotten about the promises made during the war. Thus men and women take it upon themselves to resolve the discrepancies in land ownership that prevailed in post-independent Zimbabwe.

Moyo has also demonstrated through Hondo that the new political ideology of the government does no longer tally with the peasant ideology. During the war the peasants and the freedom fighters believed in taking over the white man's farms but soon after independence the government now respects private property and views as illegal the spontaneous occupations of the white man's farm by the peasants. Thus the peasant and government ideology are no longer the same. If the peasants remain on the farm they will surely be evicted and arrested for these illegal occupations. Even though Moyo has shown the differences in government and peasant ideology on the *modus operandi* of taking back the land he has highlighted the problems that still persist in independent Zimbabwe. He has clearly demonstrated that the land issue remains unresolved; it has been shelved even though it was the main purpose of waging the liberation struggle.

Thus through his play *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* the author has given the government and the war veterans a rude awakening of what should be done, in as far as redistributing the land among the landless peasants is concerned. Magosvongwe and Makwavarara (2015) have also noted the importance of these spontaneous land occupations in the early independence period

in that they served to remind the government through the rude awakening to its commitment to resolving the racial and colonial injustices in land ownership. They assert that, “Land occupations, then, are widely perceived by the powerless as a justifiable and peaceful approach towards restoring social justice and redressing colonially-induced land inequalities and imbalances that were carried over into post-independence” (Magosvongwe & Makwavarara, 2015: 57). Raftopoulus (2009: 211) quotes Moyo (1995) who concurs with Magosvongwe and Makwavarara on why peasants invaded farms soon after independence:

Owing to a combination of a slow-down in the state’s land reform programme, intensified pressure on land in communal areas, and economic liberalisation. As a result the peasants who could not see the immediate benefits of independence had to take it upon themselves to resolve the colonial disparities in land ownership in post-independent Zimbabwe.

Even though Moyo in his play *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* does not clearly state that land redistribution considered gender justice, women represented by Rupiza, Tinazvo’s wife also formed part of the peasants who took over the white colonial farms. Still the farms are under the leadership of males, it is Tinazvo who is involved in re-allocating land to the landless peasants after a process of critically vetting if the new settlers qualify to own land. This is also ironic in the sense that even these peasants as well are discriminating against other peasants who duly participated in the struggle and also had the same aspirations and goals as them. Some of the peasants still fail to get land on the farm that Tinazvo and his friends have occupied. Tinazvo says that to his son Hondo if he had not screened the new occupants, the place would have been full already. As a result, not every peasant was accepted in these newly invaded farms.

In an interview, one of the authors highlighted that his work focused on land redistribution not according to gender because according to him women did not own land. So he understood land as a resource which should be distributed to men; and women would access it through their male counterparts. To him women had user rights to land which they accessed through their male relations. To this effect the author of the play says:

At the time I wrote my work, I was focusing on our culture. In our culture in the old days we believed in oneness and the family was one. Men and women were complementing each other and they fought for the land together. They always

supported each other and you would not find a woman fighting for the land alone like what is happening today, so even when we wrote our novels, we were encouraging unity of the family unit not that women or men should be independent. In our culture even if the men owned the land women were given their piece of land by their husbands to grow their crops and do other things. Our women were not oppressed at all...Long back when we wrote our novels this term gender did not exist. It came recently with the Europeans and their issues of human rights. This is a new culture and women are now told that they are equal to men and they should be empowered. So if a new culture comes into play, you as an author you need to first understand it and write things as they are. Most of the writers are donor funded and they tend to misinterpret some of the things (Interview with an author, 16 March 2016).

To argue that Shona culture which shaped Aaron Chiundura Moyo's social vision did not place emphasis on ownership of land by gender and thus explains why the author did not focus on the distribution of land according to gender is a misnomer. In Shona culture as has been highlighted in previous sections, men on their own could not be allocated land by the chief they had to get married first and have a wife and then from there they could qualify for land in the traditional set up. Bachelors were not allocated land. Thus Moyo argues that his main focus was redistributing land on racial lines; to redress the historical injustices that were brought about by colonialism. In a bid to redress the racial imbalances, Moyo depicts the peasants who quickly move on to the fertile and very productive farm which is owned by the white man. They are abandoning the barren areas where they had been condemned by colonial legislations. Accordingly, Tinazvo and his friends symbolise a group of disgruntled peasants who failed to understand why the government was not implementing the goals of the liberation struggle, of quickly resolving the racial injustices in land ownership in Zimbabwe. Even though the author does not boldly discuss gender justice, he implies it since women are also participating in the farm invasions. Furthermore, in the African concept of ownership once the men own the land this would cascade to the woman as well because in the traditional set up men are only allocated land through marriage.

Furthermore, Moyo does not only capture the invasion of the farm by the peasants but also the farm house which is a symbol of the colonial seat of power (Magosvongwe, 2013). This is brought out where Tinazvo says to his children, the ex-combatants who have just returned from the war:

Hurumende ipi zvakare? Pano takadzika muereza. Ndiri hurumende pachangu. Hapana anoti pwe-e pano. Ndokusakanika ndakuudza kuti mauya panguva yakanaka. Manheru ano ndinoda kuti imi muende kunorara muzimba iro, remubhunu. Handidi

kuti murara mukamba kedu kano aka. Zvamauya muri vaviri kudai nhamo yedu yekusweroshupwa, tazoidzipa napahuro. Kana mubhunu wacho akada kuuya pano nezvimapurisa zvake ndinoda kuti mutange madziridzira mudenga. Vomhanya votyoka makumbo gare, modziridzira makadzinongedza mumagaro awo vasvinure. (Vose vave kuseka). Matove kuseka? Ini ndiri kutotaura nemoyo wose. Vanhu vose pavangonzwa kuti komuredhi wokwaTinarwo auya, vabva vaziva kuti chimurenga chiya chatanga panyuwani (pp. 43-44).

(Which government are you referring to now? Here we have raised our own flag. I am the government myself. No one will challenge me here. That is why I told you that you have come at a very opportune time. Tonight I would like you to go and sleep in the white man's big house. I do not want you to sleep in this small house of ours. Now that you have come the two of you, both ex-combatants our problems with the police are over. Even if the white man decides to come here with his policemen I want you to first fire your guns into the air. They will run away and then you will fire at their backs so that they can wake up. (They all laugh). Why are you all laughing? I am saying this whole heartedly. When all the people will hear that Tinazvo's ex-combatant son is back they would all know that the liberation war is now going to start afresh)

Through humour Moyo vividly paints a picture of disillusionment among the peasants, both men and women who have realised that their goals for waging the liberation struggle have not yet been fulfilled. By firing into the settlers and law enforcing agents' backs, Tinazvo is emphasising that as peasants they cannot tolerate anyone whose intention is to derail the goals of the struggle. Through peasants like Tinazvo (which literally means we have everything and metaphorically including the land); Moyo ironically is presenting the unfulfilled promises of the war. The peasants have even taken over the colonial farm house where they want Hondo and his wife to sleep. Tinazvo and his colleagues are still living in a small house which means that they have not yet realised the goals of the struggle. All the peasants do not understand why the government is evicting them from the farm; that explains why they would vow that the war of liberation has started afresh. This is because they have not yet realised the main goal of going to war, regaining back their land. Independence can only be meaningful if people now own their dispossessed land. As long as they do not have this land it means that the struggle can continue.

Moyo (1995) and Muzondidya (2009) have both also observed that peasants were becoming impatient with the lack of land reform by the government. They therefore argue that "most of the early land invasions of the early 1980s were initiated and carried out by peasants who

were frustrated with the government's slow pace of land reform" (Moyo, Muzondidya cited in Magosvongwe, 2013). Due to the government's very slow pace of addressing the colonial imbalances in land ownership the peasants had to take it upon themselves to redress these colonial imbalances in land ownership.

Moyo also captures the betrayal and disillusionment on the side of the peasants of what they expected soon after the war. After spontaneously occupying the farms, the peasants were disappointed by government's failure to support this endeavour. Instead the government using law enforcement agents, such as the police, tells the peasants, both men and women to immediately vacate the white man's land. The government reiterates its position to the peasants that the farms still belonged to the white man and that the black people were supposed to go back to their own land; that is the reserves which were barren to which they had been condemned to by the colonial regime. This resulted in some form of betrayal on the part of the peasants; this negated what they had agreed during the war. During the liberation struggle the political speeches emphasised that the peasants would immediately occupy the farms soon after independence and this is what the peasants signified by Tinazvo and his colleagues do. To their detriment they are told to quickly vacate the farms by the government they had voted into power, the very political party they had supported during the war and had promised them this land. This was clear evidence that peasants and the government had dissenting views. The peasants therefore feel that they have been betrayed, and once they realise this betrayal disillusionment sets in.

The betrayal and disillusionment is precisely captured in the running battles that the peasants, both men and women continuously have with law enforcement agents who want them to vacate the white man's farm. Tinazvo says to his son Hondo:

Isu muno tave nedambudziko guru kwazvo. Tine vanhu vari kuda kutivhiringidza magariro edu akaisvonaka atanga tiinawo pano apa. Kuda vanenge vachifunga kuti hatinawo vana vakarwa hondo. Chokwadi vanangu mauya panguva kwayo...Mazuva ano pano apa hapazi kudyiwa rinopisa. Tiri kugara takangobatirana matanda nemapurisa. Izvozvi mangwanani anhasi tarova matatau, rimwe chete racho ranga riri remuno mupurazi... Kuno kumusha tave kurova vanangu. Izvi ndizvo zvezvimwe zvakasara zvoitika kuno imi maenda kuhondo. Heya muchiri kufunga kuti vanhu ava vachiri kutyisa sakare? (Ave kuseka zvakare) Svondo yakapera ini nemaoko angu aya, (achitambanudza maoko ake) ndakadonhedza mujoni chaiye pasi; zana rebhunu rikatsvuka ropa kuti piriviri. (Ave kukunya hembe) Mwanangu, kukura zvangu asi mumaoko aya, muchiri kubaka moto (pp.41-42).

(We now have a real big challenge in this area. We have people who want to disrupt our peaceful way of living on this farm which we have repossessed. Maybe they think that we also do not have children who participated in the liberation war as freedom fighters. For sure my children you came at a very opportune time... These days we are continuously engaged in running battles with the police. This morning we beat up three law enforcement agents, including the farm security guard. Here in the rural villages we now beat up police officers my children. These are some of the developments that took place soon after your departure to participate in the liberation struggle. Oh you still think that people are afraid of police officers? (He is laughing again). Last week with my own bare hands stretching his hands) I beat up a white police sergeant; a child of a white man who ended up having blood over his body. (He now folds his shirt sleeves like in preparation for a real fight). My child, I might seem to have aged but in these hands that you see I am still very strong)

The peasants, represented by Tinazvo, are disillusioned by this highest form of betrayal from their own government which is not redistributing land to the rightful owners of the land; the indigenous men and women of Zimbabwe who have been dispossessed by colonial legislations. Since the government is sending law enforcement agents to evict people from the land which they know rightfully belongs to them, the peasants thus end up beating the police officers. This is because they have been extremely disappointed by the government's failure to redistribute land. The peasants are glad that the ex-combatants have come at a very opportune time and believe that they would help them to ensure that their desired goals of repossessing land which has been taken away by the white man are fulfilled.

Through the continuous running battles with the police, Moyo (1985) depicts that the peasants are prepared to fight for what they believe in even when it means breaking the law. The continuous running battles visibly demonstrate the disillusionment the peasants, both men and women are experiencing. Their main goal for fighting the war has not been satisfied and hence they are prepared to fight for what they knew rightfully belonged to them. Both men and women are engaged in these running battles. This is now a typical scenario of what happens on the newly acquired farm. However, this is not what the former freedom fighters who have embraced the concept of reconciliation anticipated. The freedom fighters have moved on from war propaganda and know that the promises they made during the war were made mainly for the war time and could not be used to guide people in post-independent Zimbabwe. Thus Hondo continuously asks his father if they have been allocated the farm by the government and if not it is better for them to go back to the sandy soils they have abandoned. Tinazvo and his colleagues fail to comprehend why a former freedom fighter who was involved in the liberation struggle like Hondo fails to understand why the people took up arms to fight the white man.

In addition, Moyo further brings to the fore the fact that the government now sympathises with the former colonisers and ignores the general populace's desired goal of taking back the land which is still owned by the white people who dispossessed them in the first place. He neatly captures this through the police officer who says to the peasants:

Muri kuziva here kuti muri kugara mupurazi remuridzi zvisiri pamutemo?...Muri kugara mupurazi remurungu zvisiri pamutemo...Hapana chimwe chinhu chamungaite kunze kwokubva pano. Kana mukasaita izvi, mose muri kunorara kukamba kwedu, zvichireva kuti munenge matosungwa. Muridzi wepurazi ari kupenga chaizvo. E, ambotuma mupurisa wake uyu asi mamubata mukammurova. Muri kuziva here kuti imhosva yamatopara iyoyo yokurova munhu? E, munodii kuchibva mabva pano iye zvino uno kana kuti ndichibva ndakusungai? Ndinobva ndangoenda kunotora jipi, yozokutakurai iye... (pp. 9-10).

(Are you aware that you are illegally occupying someone's farm? ...You are illegally occupying the white man's farm...There is nothing else you can do except vacating this farm. If you do not vacate this farm, you are all going to spend the night in the cells after being imprisoned. The owner of this farm is very angry with you. He first send his farm security guard and you bit him up. Are you aware that you have already committed a crime by beating up the farm security guard? Why don't you quickly vacate this farm right now or you want to stay put and I will arrest you? I will go to collect the jeep from the police station for transporting you to jail as prisoners who do not want to abide by the law)

The law enforcement agent's message represents the highest form of betrayal. The police officer is also articulating the new ideology that the elite, the government now believes in which is very different from that of the peasants. The government now sides with the former colonial master and recognises the white man's land ownership rights and not the black people's. This is ironical for the new government is still guided by the colonial laws they tried to fight by waging the liberation war. Through this, Moyo is underlining the fact that the blacks in Zimbabwe have only attained flag independence and lack economic independence for the means of production, the land that sustains the black people's livelihood is still in the hands of the whites. This is similar to what Shimmer Chinodya refers to as the harvest of thorns in his award winning novel *Harvest of Thorns*. The liberation war has failed to change the land ownership patterns. The government now uses law enforcement agents to entrench the once rejected skewed land ownership patterns. Through this image of a police officer emphasising to the peasants to go back to the barren areas Moyo vividly captures the disillusionment that the peasants who have duly participated in the liberation struggle with a way of regaining back their land fail to achieve their goals. The play therefore, "presents the

politics of deception and betrayal of the goals of the independence” by the new government (Vambe, 2006: 268).

Shona fiction set in post-independence Zimbabwe is bold enough to discuss the betrayal and disillusionment that the peasants faced after independence. The play was published in 1985 and presents the general sentiments felt by the black people who had passed the euphoric period which had blind celebration and valorisation of the guerrillas and the struggle. By 1985 the general populace was beginning to notice that there was nothing that they had benefited by waging the liberation struggle. The presumed gains of independence are still unresolved. This is also echoed by some academics interviewed who argued that,

There is substantial and spontaneous growth in the literature with authors exhibiting maturity in their writings. It is pleasing to note that literature is put to the service of collective struggle in which men and women are in it together. Land ownership is no longer a preserve of men something which is traceable to the patriarchal Victorian society.

Hence through presenting the betrayal and disillusionment that the people felt after failing to successfully regain the land which they had fought for, Shona fictional writers can be commended for not blindly eulogising the post-independent government but are bold enough to critique its shortcomings by maintaining the status quo.

5.5.1.1 A Critique of Moyo’s Social Vision in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo*

Moyo should be commended for boldly writing about the failure of the government in fulfilling the goals of the liberation struggle. He sees beyond the government’s legislative machine that the ex-colonial regime needed a practical way of regaining the land for they would have never voluntarily surrendered the land they had expropriated from black people. During 1985 when the play was published, spontaneous occupation of land was considered a taboo that is why the government sends law enforcement agents to evict the new ‘land owners’ from the white man’s farm. However, as a writer Moyo realised that forced occupation was the language that the former colonial masters understood. Moyo is bold to write about disillusionment and betrayal whilst some people were still engrossed in the euphoria of independence and celebrating its inception. He is quick to notice by 1985 that people might be celebrating but the real reason of waging the liberation struggle had not yet

been resolved. He vividly reiterates that the black people are still dispossessed, both men and women. They have tried to chart their own destiny by taking the necessary steps to redistribute land amongst themselves by occupying the white man's farm. In this way, the blacks are not hapless victims who wait for the government to distribute land to them but take the necessary steps to start fulfilling the goals of the liberation struggle. However, their efforts are shattered for the government still respects colonial land ownership laws and does not recognise the indigenous men and women who have occupied the farms. The government is still guided by the Lancaster House Constitution in governing the so-called independent Zimbabwe.

Magosvongwe (2013: 118) has noted this discrepancy in laws that governed land ownership in post-independence Zimbabwe and states that, "It is mind boggling that post-independence land policies acknowledge and uphold legal land rights for minor settlers, yet no such rights are extended to indigenous people's claims to 'ancestral land.'" Thus Moyo (1985) has to be commended for being able to critique the government's adherence to colonial laws in post-independent Zimbabwe. He is able to write about this almost during the euphoric period and demonstrates that there is nothing to celebrate since the land that the people fought for has not been redistributed. These skewed land ownership patterns both by race and gender are also discussed by authors who write well after 2000; namely Valerie Tagwira's *Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *The Book of Not* (2006) among others. As an author, Moyo was quick to notice that post-independence period came with new problems that had to be quickly resolved, problems such as differences in perception about the land redistribution exercise between the new independent government and the dispossessed peasants. Moyo depicts the real land narrative of Zimbabwe without eulogising post-independence land ownership policies; he quickly notes their futile nature in resolving the post-independence land ownership patterns. As an author he has marched right in front of the politician and offered some solutions to the land ownership narrative in post-independent Zimbabwe.

Moyo has also managed to show how the peasants, both male and female were not quick to adjust to the post-independence situation. They still use the kangaroo courts as a way of resolving the crimes that are committed by the new occupants. During the struggle people

were tried and charged at *pungwe* meetings. Those who were found guilty were punished or murdered depending with the gravity of the matter. This is what the peasants on the farm still practise. Moyo captures the fact that the peasants have failed to adjust to the new dispensation. They do not have the right to charge offenders yet alone kill them. Instead this should be done by law enforcement agents like the police. What Tinazvo and the other peasants are doing, trying and sentencing offenders on the farm is illegal and falls outside the statutes of the country. This failure to adjust to the laws that govern the country is what makes the peasants frustrated and disillusioned in the face of land redistribution for they thought they could quickly occupy farms and redistribute land among themselves without waiting for the government intervention. What Moyo has managed to do is to demonstrate that post-independence has not addressed the gender and land ownership question. Blacks are still landless and the farms they yearn to possess are still in the hands of the white man. As an author he is giving the government guidelines on how to handle the land redistribution exercise, an idea which the government borrows when it is appropriate for it to do so as exemplified by the later reform period, the Fast Track Land Reform programme of post 2000.

It is thus not surprising that Moyo as an author and patriarchal figure distrusts addressing gender and land ownership in his novel since as a patriarchal figure he did not advocate women owning land as highlighted earlier on. The author demonstrates land ownership in Shona culture as exemplified by his understanding which comes out in the interview with him cited earlier on. However, a critical reading of his play demonstrates that women are not docile; but are determined to participate together with man in reclaiming the land. Both men and women are still suffering the same predicament of dispossession and take it upon themselves to spontaneously invade farms very early enough in the history of post-independence Zimbabwe. The spontaneous waves of farm invasions by the general populace took the government by surprise, having never thought that such spontaneous land invasions would ever be sanctioned by government. As a writer he should be commended for his social vision which sees beyond the current laws that govern a country. He also saw that if this real issue of going to war was not timeously addressed it was going to explode as what later happened under the *jambanja*, Fast Track Land Reform Programme period.

Accordingly, Moyo has successfully presented that blacks have only achieved flag independence, the real motive of going to war has not been fulfilled. He has presented that the land ownership issue has not yielded any tangible resolutions. Though Moyo does not boldly address gender justice it can be argued that his discussion of spontaneous peasant occupations did not marginalise women who in the African sense collectively owned land together with men. In his rendition he assumes focus on redressing colonial injustices but side-lining gender justice since he argues that the general thinking in what he calls African traditional culture did not accord women the right to land. However using an Africana womanist approach it can be argued that even Moyo's work also focused on gender justice; once it discussed how men could regain the land it meant that even women are also included because in African worldview men could only be allocated land after getting married. Thus in order for men to get land they also relied on women, this explains the participatory behaviour of men and women in land occupations, both genders had been dispossessed and are making efforts to regain their lost land.

Raymond Morgan Choto who also wrote around 1990 when the government had started redistributing land following the willing seller willing buyer policy also notes that this type of land redistribution was very slow and did not address the people's basic needs. The following section discusses Choto's understanding of the slow land redistribution process and spontaneous peasant land occupations that characterised early independence period in *Vavairo*.

5.5.2 Early Resettlement, Disillusionment, Betrayal and Spontaneous Peasant Land Occupations in *Vavairo*

Just like *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* discussed in the previous section, *Vavairo* is an embodiment of the disenchantment and treachery that the peasants, both men and women felt soon after independence. From a superficial reading of the novel the gender justice does not come out clearly simply because the author was writing during a period when this was not regarded as an issue. More so, his Shona cultural tradition did not have individual ownership of land in terms of gender. However, from a critical reading of the novel, and using an Africana womanist approach, the novel also deals with both racial and gender justice. This is so because in African culture men were allocated land together with women, a men could

only be eligible for land once he got married, bachelors or young unmarried men were not eligible for land allocation. Hence land in African traditional milieu was collectively owned, both men and women relied on each other in order to access this land resource. Blacks were therefore stripped off their land, both men and women, and in the struggle for regaining lost land both genders participated in it. To say that there is no gender aspect in this novel is using the western form of ownership which is individualistic and does not give access and ownership rights to women. In the African traditional context women play a significant role in also assisting men regain lost land because they own it collectively together with their husbands. Also, the peasant in African societies was a woman, thus the term peasants used to refer to the small scale farmers in the novel also includes both men and women but the majority of the peasantry population were women (Schmidt, 1992). Thus using an African womanist approach men could not own land on their own but collectively owned it with their wives or they were only allocated land after getting married. Thus whenever racial redressing of land ownership is discussed in this novel, gender justice is also implied because both men and women had been deprived of their land and were collectively working together to regain it.

Vavairo demonstrates the mismatch between the war promises and sacrifices that were made by peasants, both men and women during the war with the actual gains that these peasants got in post-independent Zimbabwe. It further highlights that the difference between the fulfillment of people's desires and the new struggles of land ownership between peasants and the emerging black elite is wafer thin. Through peasants like VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi, with their wives who have immediately occupied Dereki's farm Choto demonstrates that the real reason of going to war has not yielded any results. He brings to the fore the fact that the land ownership issue which was the main reason that forced the black people to take up arms and participate in the liberation struggle has not been resolved. The deprivation of land of the indigenous men and women by settler farmers is still stunningly clear in the post-independence period. The peasants, both male and female, who have sacrificed so much and paid through their sweat and blood, have not yet realised the gains of the liberation struggle. Instead, Choto demonstrates that there is a new class of the elite that has emerged among the black people, and this class consists of the black male elites. Their wives also access land through them. The elites have bought land and own it in the western sense where they have title deeds and individual ownership. Thus apart from racial imbalances in land ownership,

Choto also brings to the fore another dimension of injustice that is disproportionate ownership of land according to class. The emergent black elite together with the former colonial masters now own the land whilst during the colonial regime the blacks fought against injustice in land ownership according to race and gender, in the new dispensation the poor peasants fight both the colonial masters and the emerging black elite that is now owning the land.

Through the novel's title *Vavairo*, which when loosely translated means the goal, purpose or aim, Choto paints a picture of the new post-independence government's failure to fulfill the aim or purpose of going to war. Gender and racial injustices in land ownership are still prevalent in post-independent Zimbabwe. This is a clear contrast of the promises that were made during the war. Through the *pungwe* meetings during the war, the main purpose of waging the liberation war is clearly highlighted. Tumirai says to the peasants:

Yatakaronga yakaipa, vabereki. Tikabatana zvakasimba nyika tinoitora manje manje. Mapurazi aanaDereki nana Dhingi anenge ava enyu. Chingakutadzisai kutora mapurazi ese aya chii kana imi makarwisa muvengi kuti mutore nyika yenyu? Ivhu ratakatsika iri, ndiro ratiri kuda kutorera muvengi. Pasi navasvetasimba! (p. 132).

(What we have planned is incredible, parents. If we are united in the real sense we will take the land very soon after winning the war. Farms like Dereki's and Dhingi's will be yours. What can prevent you from taking these farms when you are the real people who gallantly fought the enemy to achieve total liberation? The soil which we are standing on is the one which we want to take from the hands of the enemy. Down with capitalist oppressors!)

Through invoking parents to unite with the freedom fighters in fighting white colonial masters Tumirai wants the peasants to own the struggle. His invocation makes no distinction between genders but is calling upon all, male and female alike. He is calling upon all peasants to take the struggle seriously because the future is very bright for everyone. He promises all present irrespective of gender that they will own the white men's farms after the war. They would immediately occupy them upon the attainment of independence.

Furthermore, Tumirai also unequivocally assures the peasants that once they attain independence the land will be theirs since that was the main reason of waging the liberation struggle for he also says to VaChimoto when they discuss Mr Bango's sellout activities:

‘Zvino mabhunu zvaari kupera kuenda South Africa vachateverawo here? Zimbabwe tatoitora iyi, VaChimoto zvokuti zvinhu zvichatinakira. Mapurazi aana Dereki asina anochengeta aya achatorwa nevanhu nokuti nyika inonga yava yavo. Angakutadzisai ndiani imi makabata pfuti kuti titore Zimbabwe kubva kumuchena, ndiani?’ ‘Hapana zvechokwadi,’ vakapindura VaChimoto vakabvumira pfungwa dzavo dziri papurazi raDereki. Vakafunga kukura kwanga kwakaita purazi iri ndokubva vangoti dai hondo yapera zvayo vaenda kundogara papurazi raDereki. Chaivatadzisa chaiva chii chaizvo kana nyika yazenge yatorwa nepfuti? Vakafunga kudaro vakagara nanaTumirai (p. 124).

(Now that the Boers are all trekking down to South Africa will he also follow them there? Zimbabwe is already in our hands Mr Chimoto such that things are going to be at our advantage. Farms like Dereki’s that have been abandoned will be taken by the majority black people because the land will be theirs. Who would prevent you from occupying the white man’s farm when you duly participated in the liberation struggle that ushered in independence?’ ‘No one indeed,’ replied VaChimoto when he was busy reminiscing about Dereki’s farm. In his mind he thought about how big this farm was and just wished if the war could soon end so that he could go and occupy Dereki’s farm. What would prevent him from taking over that farm if the barrel of the gun would have ushered in independence? He was thinking about this whilst he was sitting with Tumirai and the other freedom fighters).

The basis for the peasants, both male and female to take over land in post-independent Zimbabwe is set by the freedom fighters through war propaganda. The peasants are gullible and believe in all that the freedom fighters promise them. The peasants’ contribution to the war through various sacrifices was the only credential needed for one to repossess the land that the white colonial farmers like Dereki and Dhangi have seized from the black people. The hope to own fertile white colonial farms gives the peasants the energy to whole heartedly undertake the struggle for they dreamt that at the end of the war the balance of power will tilt in their favour as far as land ownership was concerned. The skewed land ownership patterns that favoured the white minority farmers were going to be addressed soon after independence.

Chigidi (2009) has also observed that the peasants were promised farms though the government redistribution programmes once the black majority rule was attained. The two dominant parties that fought for the liberation of this country Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) had promised redressing the disparities in land ownership to the land hungry peasants during the liberation struggle (Tshuma, 1997; Mafa, et. al. 2015). Kriger also noted these promises that were made during the war. She states that “the people were promised that they would inherit white farms, houses, cars and jobs” (Kriger, 1992: 98). Chigidi further states that “the peasants were good

listeners and had good memories. Above all they were poor. Now that the victory had come they expected to get land and these other good things immediately” (Chigidi, 2009: 218). Many scholars attest to the land hungry peasants’ need to immediately get land soon after independence as was promised during the war (Moyo, 1995; Mafa, et. al. 2015; Magosvongwe, 2013).

However, this did not quickly materialise. Accordingly, peasants like VaChimoto together with their families when they failed to see the government’s commitment to the promises that were made during the war, immediately occupied the white man’s farm because this is what they had fought for. This is what Raymond Morgan Choto vividly captures in his novel *Vavariro* (1990). The spontaneous occupations of farms by peasants, both men and women were unacceptable to the new government of Zimbabwe which respected private property and was being guided by the Lancaster House Constitution in its governance. The differences in ideology and how the land redistribution was to take place between the peasants and the new government is what brought in the disillusionment to the peasants who had selflessly sacrificed to regain the land that had been taken away from them by the colonial masters. Both men and women were disillusioned, the women therefore were working side by side with their men in order to regain lost land in post-independent Zimbabwe through spontaneous farm occupations. They are working together to reclaim the land because dispossession affected both genders and hence land restoration should also be done to all people irrespective of gender.

In his novel Choto depicts the peasants’ reasons for participating in the struggle, to take back the land which had been taken away from them. After spontaneously occupying Dereki’s farm and enjoying the fruits of such land VaKanyuchi says gloatingly to VaChimoto “*Ndizvo tairwira izvi, komuredhi*” (p. 149). (This is what we fought for comrade). Through this statement Choto presents to the fore the fact that the peasants had duly participated in the struggle to regain their dispossessed land. VaKanyuchi and VaChimoto feel so contented that they have managed to take back the fertile land which had been violently taken away from them by the white colonial masters. Together with their families they are now enjoying the benefits of the liberation struggle. Their participation in the struggle was plainproof for they stood to benefit by getting fertile land like Dereki’s farm. The peasant jubilation due to

repossession of land ownership in post-independent Zimbabwe is also noted by Kriger (1992: 228) who states that “many peasants had understood guerilla promises of free living to mean that they could select whatever land they wanted, and farm free of any other rules or regulations.” Thus VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi and their wives symbolise many peasants who prided in repossessing land from the white colonial masters. This was after all, the main reason for participating in the liberation struggle. Both VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi and their families now live on Dereki’s farm. Even though the land still legally belongs to Dereki, they have appropriated the formerly expropriated land to themselves. Both male and female now have access to fertile land, women have accessed it under the leadership of their husbands. VaKanyuchi and VaChimoto occupied Dereki’s farm as families.

Furthermore, Choto portrays the peasants as being champions of the aspirations of the struggle in the face of the government’s slow land redistribution programme. Because of the sluggish government land redistribution programme, the peasants have to take it upon themselves to redress the colonial imbalances in land ownership. Through *Africana Womanism* redressing colonial injustices in land ownership also implies redressing gender inequalities because both men and women own land collectively, there is no individual ownership of land in African traditional culture. The peasants therefore, spontaneously occupied the deserted white man’s farm which has fertile soils; a thing they were promised during the war. The area that the peasants occupy is very fertile such that during the first year of occupancy VaChimoto and his wife are able to grow enough crops for their family and the surplus is sold to the Grain Marketing Board (p. 149). This is because Dereki’s farm they have taken over is very fertile and can produce more crops than the barren reserves they had been condemned to. Even the quality of the crops grown is of first grade since the soil is very fertile. This is brought out where VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi chuckle to themselves enjoying the fruits of land they have taken for themselves for they say:

‘Hunonzi hwahwa Kanyuchi. Ungatambe nevhu repano iyewe?’ vakadaro VaChimoto vachifuridza mukau mechikwepa chavo. VaKanyuchi vakaseka ndokubva vati, ‘Pwa dzapano dzinonaka kudarika dzekwatakabva. Chibage chapano chinokura kudarika kumazijecha kwatakatiza. Zviyo zvepano zvinoita doro rinonaka kupinda mazimvura atainwa kumajecha kwatanga takarasirirwa naSimisi. Mukati bhurazeni uya mupenyu?’ (p. 149)

(‘This is what we call real beer Kanyuchi. Do not take the soils on this farm for granted my dear?’ Said VaChimoto blowing off some cigarette smoke. VaKanyuchi

laughed and said, ‘This place produces sweeter cane than the barren areas we came from. The maize crop on this farm is healthier and more vibrant than the one in the sandy soils we ran away from. The grain on this farm brews better beer than the watery tasteless beer we used to drink in the sandy areas where we had been condemned to by Smith. Could that fellow be still alive?)

Through the images of sweet cane and watery and tasteless beer Choto depicts that the white man’s farm was very fertile compared to the sandy soils that the black men and women had been condemned to in the reserves. Even the crops that are grown by VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi and their families are healthier crops when juxtaposed against the ones they grew in the Tribal Trust Lands they had ran away from. There is persistent repetition of the word *kujecha*, (sandy soils) to clearly present how barren and infertile the land the black majority had been condemned to by the white colonial masters. Makaudze (2009) has also noted the differences in fertility between the reserves and Dereki’s farm in *Vavairo*. He states that, “The contrast is clear; the reserves where the majority of people live yield poor crops. The cane does not taste good. The maize is frivolous and malnourished. The grain is poor and so the beer is not sweet” (Makaudze 2009: 164). By giving these contrasting images Choto demonstrates that the reserves that the peasants occupied were so barren such that nothing could grow there while the white man’s farm which was fertile could produce abundant crops, this explains how in less than a year VaChimoto and his wife, in just one farming season could grow enough crops to feed their family and also for sell at the Grain Marketing Board. They sold the surplus produce in just one year.

Hanlon, et. al. (2013) have also noted the government’s failure to quickly redistribute land to land hungry peasants soon after independence. This resulted in the peasants’ spontaneous occupations of white farms, to fulfill the goals and aims of the liberation struggle and in a way redressing the colonial and gender imbalances in land ownership. They affirm that, “Independence brought many spontaneous occupations, particularly of white farms abandoned in the war and chiefs trying to regain land that had been taken away from them and given to white farmers decades before” (Hanlon, et. al. 2013: 30). The peasants had to occupy farms to fulfill the goals of the liberation struggle. The spontaneous occupations somehow brought some fulfillment and contentment to peasants in as far as redressing the colonial injustices in land ownership was concerned. Choto demonstrates the peasants’

fulfillment and contentment through VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi who now occupy the former white man's farm. Raftopoulos has also noted these spontaneous land occupations by peasants who were dissatisfied by the government's very slow pace of redressing the colonial land injustices in the early 80s. He affirms that: "While the government followed its preferred policy of land acquisition at that time the 1980s witnessed low-intensity land occupations or squatting carried out by various communities" (Raftopoulos, 2004: 3). The peasants when they found that their goals and aspirations of regaining the land were not being realised had to take it upon themselves to effect that change. Both men and women were in concert together in fulfilling the goals of the liberation struggle.

Choto goes further to depict that the peasants' fulfillment and contentment of redressing the colonial injustices in land ownership is short lived. This is because the new elite of former ex-combatants have formed an emergent social class which no longer shares the same struggles and aspirations as the peasants. Independence has brought some differences in perception on how the land ownership problem should be resolved. The emerging social class of the elite in the novel is represented by Jeri who has managed to buy land in exclusive Christon Bank area where he now practices market gardening and sells the produce for the elite in the city of Harare (p. 148). Also, Comrade Tumirai who has become an MP for Dande and Mandava areas is also part of the elite. He also has bought a house in the posh and ambient suburb of Harare, in the Grange where the former colonial masters used to live. Furthermore, MP Nhamoyetsoka who comes to evict the peasants from Dereki's farm is also a member of the social class of the elite that has emerged after independence. Apart from former freedom fighters, the elite also comprise of very fortunate war collaborators like Jeri. Choto presents the fact that the elites no longer have the same vision and aspirations as far as land redistribution in post-independence should be redressed. Instead the elites now own land at the expense of the peasants and they no longer share the same political ideology of land redistribution as happened during the liberation struggle (p. 148; 155-157). The elite mainly comprise of black indigenous men at the expense of women. Independence therefore has brought different social classes of peasants and former freedom fighters mainly men who now form part of the elite in post-independent Zimbabwe and have gained land at the expense of women. The elite now support private property ownership of land and to make matters even worse they maintain white ownership of land through reconciliation and the Lancaster House Constitution (Chinyowa, 2001: 94). These elites have bought land for themselves and

have avoided spontaneous occupation of unallocated land like the peasants; they also want their private property which they have newly acquired to be protected by the same Lancaster House Constitution.

Furthermore, Choto highlights that the emerging elite that fought side by side with the peasants in the liberation struggle and promised them free occupation of the white men's farms are the very same people who come to evict the peasants from their newly occupied farms. This brought in some disillusionment and betrayal on the part of the peasants because the very same people whom they fed during the struggle and the people who have advised them that they would occupy white men's farms soon after independence are the very same people who come to evict them from the farms. Choto neatly captures this through Nhamoyetsoka who comes to the farm that VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi and their families have occupied on 20 May 1981 and advises them that they have illegally occupied Dereki's farm (p.150). He advises them that as their Member of Parliament he has heard through another white Member of Parliament for Mazowe that there are people who are illegally occupying Dereki's farm (p. 150). Nhamoyetsoka advises the peasants to quickly vacate the farm because the relatives of the deceased white farmer now want to take back their kindred's farm and continue with the economic activities that were carried out there (150). The MP further cautions the peasants to quickly vacate the farm; he gives them three months' notice to go back to their homes, the barren reserves where no meaningful farming production can be practiced (p.151).

Through Nhamoyetsoka and the peasants, Choto amply presents how the differences in perception of how the post-independence land redistribution exercise should be carried out. The newly emerged social class now sides with the white minority for the MP says he has heard from his fellow white member of parliament. The elites represented by Nhamoyetsoka now believe in private property ownership of land, and respect the white people's ownership of land. This is ironical because Nhamoyetseola being the MP should have represented his people in parliament to advance their views and aspirations of equitable land redistribution; instead he wants to evict them from the farm and is incredulous in what they have done. Also, he forces them back to the barren areas they have been condemned to by Ian Smith. This baffles the peasants for they do not understand why a fellow black man who has fought the

war and shared in the same vision as theirs of taking back land from the white man no longer thinks like them. More so, through Nhamoyetsoka's actions Choto demonstrates that the parliament, the highest decision-making political body, which is supposed to advance the wishes of the different constituencies does not support the spontaneous occupations of land, instead it forces the peasants to quickly go back to the miserable Tribal Trust Lands where they have come from.

The difference in perception on how the land redistribution exercise should be done is neatly captured in Nhamoyetsoka and the peasants' interaction. Mrs Chimoto says to Nhamoyetsoka, "*Imi komuredhi imi mune magirazi muri kuziva here kuti hondo yatairwa yaiva yekurwira ivhu ramakatsika iro?*" (p. 150). (You comrade with spectacles are you aware that the war that we fought was for us to reclaim the very soil you are standing on). Mrs Chimoto quickly reminds the former freedom fighter of the goals and aspirations of the liberation struggle for he seems to have quickly forgotten why people waged the war of liberation to regain back their land. Additionally, VaKanyuchi says, "*Handifungi kuti zvamuri kutaura munozviziva. Purazi rino ndera Dereki akapfurwa nemakomuredzi munguva yehondo. Muridzi waro akafa kudhara*" (p. 150). (I do not think that you know what you are saying. This farm belongs to Dereki who was shot by the freedom fighters during the war. The owner of this farm died a long time ago). VaKanyuchi is further reinforcing what Mrs Chimoto has said that the land no longer belongs to the white man but has been taken over by the new occupants, the peasants both men and women as they were promised during the war. Besides the peasants rightfully own the land because they have made a lot of personal sacrifices during the war in order for them to regain back the land that was taken away from them.

Choto does not end by showing the differences in perception on how land redistribution should be done but goes further to demonstrate how the government through Nhamoyetsoka forcibly evicts the peasants, both men and women from the farm they have occupied. To elucidate the forced evictions Choto says,

Mazuva akamedzana sokuseka. Mazuva okudzoka kwamapurisa akakwana. Mapurisa akauya aine pfuti, mabhurudhoza neimbwa. VaChimoto naVaKanyuchi pavakaona motokari dzichisvika, vakabva vaziva kuti zvinhu zvaipa. Mazimbwa amapurisa akatangisa kuhukura zvinotyisa. 'Hamusi kuda kubva pano here? Mukuru

wamapurisa akabvunza achidhonza imbwa yake kuti isarume VaChimoto zvekare. 'Zvino tinogara kupi?' VaChimoto vakabvunza vaona kuti nyaya yaipa. Imbwa vaidzitya chaidzo. Ropa rakanga rodonha richibva patsapfu. 'Hamuna kumusha kwenyu here? Munoda kuita zvekurohwa here kuti munzwe? Izvozvi tanga tanzi tisvikokurumisai mose nembwa kana maita nharo. Pura zi ramuri iri nderaDereki, hama dzake dzava kuda kushandisa nzvimbo ino. Kana muchida kwekurima munoenda kuminda mirefu. Muri kuzvinzwa here?' 'Tazvinzwa, komuredhi. Zvino tinoenda nei?' Mukuru wamapurisa akatanga abata chirebvu ndokubva ati 'Tutirai zvinhu zvenyu mumotokari iyo. Nhasi tiri kunokusiyai mavakudzimba dzenyu.' VaChimoto navamwe vavo vakatuta zvinhu ndokubva vazviisa mumarori amapurisa. Imbwa dzainge dzakavagarira vachituta zvinhu zvavo. Romusi uyu rakazonyura vava kudongo kwavo (pp. 151-152).

(Time quickly passed unnoticed. The days for the return of the police officers drew near. The police came armed with guns, police dogs and bull dozers to evict the harmless peasants from Dereki's farm. When VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi saw the police arriving in their trucks they knew that everything had gone wrong. The police dogs started barking viciously on the new occupiers. 'You do not want to vacate this farm?' the head of the police delegation asked whilst he was straining the dog from biting VaChimoto again. 'Now where do we go and stay?' VaChimoto asked. He was so much afraid of dogs, and blood was dribbling from where he had been bitten by the police dog. Do you not have your own homes? Do you want to be beaten in order for you to understand? Right now we had been instructed to unleash dogs on all of you if you continue to show resistance to vacate this farm. This farm that you are occupying he advised them belongs to Dereki and his relatives who now want to take over his farm and use it. If you want land go to the government sponsored resettlement areas. Do you hear me?' 'So comrade how do we get back to our homes?' asked VaChimoto. The leader of the police delegation advised, "Load your belongings into that truck. Today we are going to leave you at your homes. VaChimoto and his colleagues loaded their stuff onto the police trucks. Dogs were waiting for them as they did the packing. By the end of that particular day they had gone back to their reserves and had vacated Dereki's farm.

Choto has amply demonstrated the disillusionment and betrayal that the peasants, both male and female felt by being forcibly evicted by their government which they had voted into power. The government through the MP has sent law enforcement agents; it descends heavily on the new land occupiers. It unleashes police dogs, sends bulldozers and even armed police officers with guns to unarmed peasants. Through this altercation with the police, Choto demonstrates that history is cyclical; the evictions are reminiscent of the colonial mass movements of blacks by the colonial government from fertile areas to barren areas in the reserves. The use of bulldozers reminds us of how the Tangwena people's houses were erased by the colonial government as a way of making the blacks to move away from their homes with fertile soils to the newly created reserves (Mafa, et. al. 2015; Mugari, 2015). Ironically

the new independent government uses the same mechanism of forcibly evicting its citizens from the fertile farm they have occupied. Just like the colonial regime the newly elected government also sends bulldozers and unleashes dogs on its citizens and forces them to go and stay in the reserves where they have been condemned to by the colonial regime.

Through such a picture of forced removals Choto demonstrates that independence has not changed anything in terms of land ownership. The land still belongs to the white man; that is why police officers also repeated the MP's words that the farm has to go back to its rightful owners; Dereki's relatives who now want to continue the economic activities that were being done on the farm prior to Derekis's death. Land ownership amongst blacks even in post-independence Zimbabwe is still a rare occurrence. Instead, the government advises peasants to take part in the government redistribution exercise if they wanted to own land and practice farming. The agitated and betrayed peasants had no option but just to comply and go back to the barren areas where they were trying to vacate. This independence has brought no change in land ownership, it still belongs to the white man and blacks, both male and female are still being condemned to the barren reserves even by a government which they have duly elected.

Vambe (2006) has also noted the irony of this ideological rift between the peasants and the former freedom fighters who now form the elite of the day:

The ideological delinking between the aspirations of the people and those of the nationalist leaders. Nhamoyetsoka accentuates the process of de-linking from mass politics of struggle for land when he suggests that African peasants are illegally occupying Dereki's farm... What Raymond Choto successfully captures here is the struggle to control land that is now between the peasants living in overcrowded sandy soils and the black elites (Vambe, 2006: 267-268).

Through showing the ideological delinking between the peasants and the elite Choto insists that the land issue had not yet been resolved by 1990 when the novel was published. The people's goals and aspirations for participating in the struggle still hang in the balance. This explains why Mrs Chimoto symbolising other peasants doubts Nhamoyetsoka's war credentials because he seems unwilling to share the goals and aspirations that were perpetually reiterated during *pungwe* meetings that the main purpose of waging the war was to regain the land that had been taken away by the colonial masters.

Furthermore, Choto has clearly demonstrated how the peasants, both men and women were disillusioned and betrayed by the former freedom fighters whom they had worked together with during the war promising each other to quickly take over white farms soon after independence. Vambe (2006: 267) observes that Choto in *Vavariro* has successfully presented that:

The peasants' resistance against the new elites demonstrates that post-colonial Zimbabwe is politically volatile with new struggles waged along class lines. The conclusion of the novel where the peasants are whisked back to their sandy soils suggests that the masses were betrayed by those whom they fed during the struggle. In fact Tumirai is being cynical when he thanks VaChimoto for helping the guerillas to win the war and enjoy the fruits of independence.

Through the peasants' resistance to leave the newly occupied farm, Choto has managed to give a portrait of unfulfilled liberation war promises on the part of the peasants. It is only a selected few, a class of the emerging black male elites like Tumirai that has benefited from the fruits of independence despite the fact that all the people including the peasants like VaChimoto, VaKanyuchi and their wives have sacrificed so much for this liberation war. Among the elites who have benefited from the fruits of independence, women have not benefited in their own right. Independence therefore has brought in disillusionment, unfulfilled promises and some form of betrayal of the highest order since it is only a group of a selected few individuals, the elites that have benefited from the fruits of independence. The rest of the peasants are, however, forcibly evicted from the land because they have illegally occupied land which belongs to the white man even in post-independent Zimbabwe. Choto thus captures the government's role soon after independence that it "defended the whites in the economy" (Alexander, 2003: 86).

In *Vavariro* Choto establishes that the government is following the dictates of the Lancaster House Constitution which disadvantages the peasants and the general black populace, men and women included. The peasants themselves do not have confidence in constitutions but in regaining the land that was forcefully taken away from them which they rightfully fought for through the blood that was shed during the liberation struggle. VaKanyuchi says, "*Ndizvo ndiri kuti vachabuda muno vachimhanya. Zvana konisititusheni izvo izvi hazvina nebasa rese zviya. Chipepa chinonetsei, tinochibvarura kana kutoswera tochimoneresa fodya zvedu isu*

vana Kanyuchi” (p. 145). (That is why I am saying they will leave this country running. Constitutions are of no use to us. What role does a piece of paper play in our lives, the likes of us Kanyuchi we can easily tear it up and use the paper to roll tobacco into cigarettes). Thus considering the sacrifices that the peasants have made during the war it is a given fact to them that they should be regaining the dispossessed land without any intervention by constitutions. Tshuma (1997) has affirmed the major goal of the liberation struggle as regaining the land. He affirms that “The liberation war was therefore fought to liberate that land and restore it to its rightful owners” (Tshuma, 1997: 1). Failure by the government to satisfy this goal makes the peasants question the authenticity of the black government they have elected into power. Both men and women who have participated in the war question the credentials of the ex-guerillas who seem to care more about constitutions than redressing colonially induced racial and gender injustices in land ownership as was preached during the war at *pungwe* meetings.

Magosvongwe and Makwavarara (2015: 48) have also noted how the use of foreign constitutions in governing the country has perpetuated racial and gender disparities in land ownership and state that:

Unfortunately, the government carried over the land policies and language of the colonial dogma, labeling the land occupiers ‘squatters,’ regardless of their landless and historical link with the land. The government went on to authorise the evictions of the so-called ‘illegal occupiers’ using the discourse of the rule of law and property rights.

The use of foreign constitutions has perpetuated the land dispossession of black men and women who cannot easily occupy the white man’s farms as they had been promised during the war. Instead the Lancaster House Constitution just like colonial legislations still labels the black people who have spontaneously invaded farms “squatters.” This explains why the post-independent government just like the colonial government acts brutally on such people and evicts them with the use of bull dozers, guns and police dogs. This is because constitutionally what they have done is illegal and unacceptable, as squatters they therefore have to be evicted brutally. On the other hand “the peasants fail to comprehend why the government they have elected into power uses well maintained police boots against them” (Chigidi, 2009: 220; Ngugi 1986: 9). This brings the highest form of betrayal on the part of the peasants.

Additionally, Choto depicts that it was even a struggle for the few black elites to benefit from the land redistribution exercise; legally land still belonged to the whites. Some of these few elites managed to get land through purchasing it and not freely as was promised during the war. During the liberation struggle it had been emphasised that the blacks would simply occupy the white man's farms without necessarily paying for them (p. 132). However this is a far cry from what transpired after the war. The land still belonged to the whites. The country was being governed by the Lancaster House Constitution which respected private property. This explains why both Jeri and Tumirai have to pay for the land they have acquired. Jeri has bought a plot in the secluded area of Christon Bank (p. 148) and Tumirai buys a house in the Grange, one of the most affluent suburbs of Harare which is reserved for a selected few. Tumirai also has access to a bank loan which enables him to buy that piece of land in the Grange residential area (p. 157).

Even the government of Zimbabwe is failing to get land for free from the white farmers but is paying for it through the World Bank policy of willing seller willing buyer and then redistributes it to the people (Tshuma, 1997; Moyo & Chambati, 2013; Mafa et al. 2015; Moyo, Tsikata & Diop, 2015). Tumirai says to VaChimoto, "*Iye zvino hurumende iri kutenga mapurazi kuti vanhu vaende kundoita mushandirapamwe vachirima. Ndosaka taiti mapurazi evarungu achava edu. Handiti muri kuzvionanwo?*" (p. 157). (Right now the government is buying farms so that people can be resettled there and practice communal farming. That is why we said that white farms will be ours. Are you not seeing it for yourself?) Repossession of land through buying as the government is now doing was never imagined during the war. Thus VaChimoto and the rest of the peasants fail to comprehend why this land has to be bought and yet during the war they had been promised to get the land for free (Kriger, 1992). The irony is that the government was now paying for land that had been expropriated from the black people; the whites themselves had never bought this land when they took it away from black people (Tshuma, 1997). Also, the process of buying the land through the willing seller willing buyer made it very slow since the willing sellers took their time in identifying the land that they wanted to sell to the government which would eventually be used for redistribution. Thus Choto hints that the first land redistribution exercise was very slow and left people still dissatisfied with the pace at which the exercise was going.

Also, Choto demonstrates that women still access land through their male counterparts in his novel either on occupied farms or in government sponsored land resettlement programmes. In an interview with one academic-cum-critic commenting on whether Shona fiction had successfully managed to write on gender and land ownership he said:

Fiction writers before independence write from the level of critical realists and not of the much cherished socialist realist perspective for fear of censorship. They just account for the land imbalances without giving what really causes them. Those who are writing after independence like Choto (1990) link cause and effect. Choto understands that the Lancaster house Constitution and the Principle of reconciliation and of the Willing-buyer-willing-seller adopted at independence perpetuated the colonial and patriarchal methods of distributing land. In fact, colonialism and the patriarchal order worked hand in glove to make sure women did not get land (Interview with an academic-cum-critic 16 July 2016).

The cited academic seems to be highlighting that even in Choto's novel women still access land through their male counterparts. Even though they participate together with men in spontaneously occupying the white man's farm, the male figure is still considered the one who has power on how the land is redistributed and allocated to other occupants. Even in the government sponsored resettlement programme land is still allocated to household heads that were presumed to be male. Such a scenario raises eye brows because unlike in the traditional African culture in which both men and women collectively owned the land, it belonged to the family and not the male figurehead, the government-sponsored land resettlement allocation in the early 80s vests ownership rights in the male figurehead whose name was put on the lease agreement papers for the farm. The new form of ownership raises eyebrows for it now has title deeds and lease agreements written in the man's name, a factor which further marginalises women from land ownership

Unlike in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* where the author portrays the resolving of the land dispute through force as exemplified by the typical running battles between the police and the peasants who have occupied the farm, Choto brings dialogue as a way of resolving the land dispute. This might be explained by the fact that Choto wrote his novel in 1990 after the land resettlement programme had already been implemented. Whilst Moyo published his play in 1985 when the government's land resettlement programme was yet to commence, nothing had really materialised by the beginning of that year. Choto therefore gives the solution to addressing colonial racial and gender imbalances in land ownership as the government-sponsored land resettlement programme. This is brought out through Tumirai who explains at

great length to VaChimoto that if he wants land and intends to practice farming he should go and settle on the government-sponsored resettlement farms. Tumirai says;

Ko makanga madii kuenda kuminda mirefu kuri kudaidzirwa vanhu?...Dai mambosvika kunonzi kuminda mirefu munoona zviri kuita vana veZimbabwe. Hurumende iri kukurudzira kuti vanhu varime zvokuti vazhinji vari kupihwa mbeu nefotereza nechikwereti vozodorera mari yacho kana vakohwa...Zvomoita apa zvingakubatsirai imi nemhuri yenyu kuendawo kuminda mirefu kune vamwe munorima zvamunoda muchitengesawo. Muno mudhorobha mune nhamo yemuriwo zvokuti imi mukarima makabichi akawanda munokwanisa kuuya kuzotengesera vanhu kumusika. Munogona kuita mari zvokuti vanoshanda munenge muchivakunda. Mari izere muno muZimbabwe, chazvinoda kushandisa musoro. Fungai kuti mukarima matomati, maonyenzi matapiri nemakabichi munoita mari yakadii? (pp.154, 156, 158)

(Why did you not go to the resettlement areas where the government is inviting people to go and farm? It would be reasonable if you visit these resettlement farms and see what other children of Zimbabwe who have been resettled are doing. The government is encouraging people to farm such that it is loaning them farming inputs like seeds and fertilizers which they can repay after successfully selling their produce after harvest...What you can do now that which can assist you and your family is to join the bandwagon and go and resettle on the government sponsored resettlement farms such that you can also grow crops and sell. Here in the city there is a serious shortage of vegetables such that if you grow cabbages in abundance you can come to sell them here in the city at the market. You can also earn more money through farming such that you can surpass the income of salaried workers. Here in Zimbabwe there is a lot of opportunities for making money, what is only needed is to plan on how to make it. Imagine if you grow tomatoes, onions, potatoes and cabbages imagine the amount of money you can make?)

Through Tumirai's extended explanation to VaChimoto, Choto presents the solution to redressing the racial and gender disparities in land ownership in Zimbabwe as the government-sponsored land resettlement programme. Not everyone can get a salaried job, since some of these jobs need educated people hence the need for land for such individuals (p. 158). Choto also presents the irony of the new government which requires educated people to do certain jobs but during the war it never questioned the credentials of those who participated in the war, everyone participated according to their ability. Thus through Tumirai and VaChimoto's extended dialogue, Choto seems to suggest that those who are not educated and fail to be absorbed by the flooded job market should go and join the government-sponsored resettlement programme. These could grow crops on these farms and earn a decent livelihood through growing vegetables that can be sold to the city people who have no land to grow vegetables. Accordingly, people like VaChimoto can earn even more money than those who are employed through market gardening. In addition, the practice of agriculture in the

resettlement areas has been made possible through government loan which enables them to buy the necessary inputs and can only be repaid at the end of the farming season after selling their produce. By giving people loans to support farming the government was also doing what Smith did during his time, he supported farmers by giving them loans to practice agriculture (Hanlon, et. al. 2015).

Vambe (2006: 268) has also observed the use of dialogue in resolving the land question in *Vavairo*. He affirms that:

Peasants in *Vavairo* do not opt for open revolt against the politics of deception and betrayal of the goals of independence by the new elites; rather the novel uses descriptive technique of the questioning mode to measure the distance between the war promises and the reality of the unfulfilled aims of that war of liberation.

As a result, through Tumirai and Chimoto's dialogue, the discrepancies of the war promises and what has actually materialised are laid bare. VaChimoto also justifies to Tumirai that the sacrifices they have made during the struggle and the promises that were made to them by hypocritical guerillas like him have landed them in trouble. However, at the end of his visit to Tumirai VaChimoto seems to have understood now that what was promised during the war is not exactly what is obtaining on the ground since the government has only achieved flag independence and not economic independence (p. 157). Hence blacks now had to work very hard through farming in the government sponsored resettlement programme on an individual basis. Farming could improve their source of livelihoods and not to spontaneously occupy farms that belonged to white people as they had done. Choto brings to the fore the fact that land still belongs to the white man and the black people if they want it they had to either buy it as individuals or to acquire it through government resettlement programme which was guided by the willing seller willing buyer principle. Thus in principle nothing had changed in terms of who owned the land, it was still in the hands of the minority whites and blacks could only access it through buying or government land resettlement. Consequently independence had failed to satisfy the aspirations of the struggle where blacks could easily redress the colonially induced racial and gender imbalances in land ownership as was expected during the war. It brought disillusionment, betrayal and unfulfilled promises.

5.5.2.1 A Critique of Choto's Social Vision in *Vavairo*

Choto just like Moyo should be applauded for boldly writing about the failure of the government in fulfilling the goals of the liberation struggle. In his novel he presents that the government resettlement programme was slow and failed to expedite the land question both in racial and gender terms. This explains why peasants like VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi together with their families had to spontaneously occupy Dereki's farm as a way of redressing the colonially induced racial and gender imbalances in land ownership. Choto (1990) in the same breath as Moyo (1985) vividly presents that the black people are still dispossessed, both men and women. They have tried to chart their own destiny by taking the necessary steps to redistribute land amongst themselves by spontaneously occupying the white man's farm. The blacks refrain from passively waiting for the government to distribute land to them but take the initiative of fulfilling the goals of the liberation struggle. This is what Afrocentricity encourages that blacks should not be passive but should be in the forefront of writing their own history by changing their destiny. However, the peasants' effort is shattered for the government still upholds colonial land ownership laws at the expense of the black people who have illegally occupied the white men's farms. The government is still guided by the Lancaster House Constitution in governing the so-called independent Zimbabwe. Writing about the government's failure to fulfill the goals of the liberation struggle during the first ten years of independence when everyone seemed to have been in a celebratory mood and praising the government was very brave. Most challenges that the country is facing set in after 1990 when the people began to feel the effects of the World Bank imposed Structural Adjustment Programme. Choto is a responsible writer who decides to write about the challenges that society is facing, he writes about the "burning issues of the day" (Ngugi, 1986).

Moreover, Choto demonstrates that knowledge about the government's land reform programme is a preserve of a selected few. VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi together with their families seem to act on insufficient information about the government sponsored resettlement programme. This information on the resettlement exercise is only available to the elites like Tumirai. It is ironical that the government fails to address the masses who have made it possible for Zimbabwe to get independent and explain to them what is being done to alleviate the land shortage that they had fought for. During the liberation struggle when the guerrillas wanted to convey information about the goals and aspirations of the war they penetrated the

villages and held *pungwe* meetings in which they highlighted such goals so that the people could understand. The greatest weakness of the government is its failure to engage the people who contributed to the attainment of independence and informing them of the new paradigm shift; that land can only be accessed through resettlement programmes and not the spontaneous land occupations as VaChimoto and the other peasants have done. Instead the elites only go back to the peasants after independence to threaten, warn and evict them from the farms they have occupied. Choto should be commended for highlighting this chasm between the emerging elites and the peasants who helped the guerrillas in executing the liberation struggle.

Furthermore, Choto presents the new struggles that have arisen with independence. During the liberation struggle the blacks were fighting racial discrimination and unequal distribution of land between the whites and blacks who had dispossessed the black populace of their prime land. In the post-independence period the majority of the people are now fighting both the whites and the new emergent class of the black elites who have access to land. Thus post-independence struggles of land are directed both to the minority whites and the newly emergent black elites like Tumirai and Nhamoyetsoka. Choto should be applauded for vividly presenting that independence was not a panacea to people's land deprivation problems, instead new struggles of land along class, race and gender have emerged. The majority of black women and men were still dispossessed and a few black male individuals who were part of the elite had benefited from the fruits of independence.

Choto also does not give a homogenous picture of peasants; not all peasants believed in spontaneous occupation of farms. There were some who were sceptical of the whole thing and had a rough idea of how the newly elected government would react to spontaneous occupations of farms. This is brought out where VaKanyuchi says, "*Ko, povho iya yakaramba kuuya kuno iri kubatana nei kujecha uko? Aya ndiwo mafotini sikopo dhonoro evanhu*" (p. 149). (What is happening to the rest of the masses who refused to spontaneously occupy this farm? How are they surviving in those sandy soils? Those people are daft). Through this statement Choto demonstrates that there were some peasants, men and women who did not join the bandwagon of spontaneous farm occupations, not because they were content with the barren areas they had been condemned to by Smith but because they were

sceptical and did not believe in the war promises. Such peasants knew that such illegal settlements would not last and government intervention would see them forcefully evicted from the white colonial farms. Mrs Chimoto says to her husband “*Iko kusekwa kwatichaitwa nenyika gore rino, hameno*” (p. 152). Mrs Chimoto’s statement clearly demonstrates that there were some peasants who had warned those who went occupy farms against doing so, not because they did not want land themselves but they foresaw the potential evictions by the government from those newly occupied farms. Choto shows that not all peasants were gullible to the promises made during the war for they stayed put on their barren lands because they wanted to avoid the humiliation that went with forced removals from these farms should that come into effect.

Accordingly, Choto just like Moyo, has successfully presented that blacks have only achieved flag independence, economic empowerment has failed to materialise. Land ownership which is central to the economies of such developing nations as Zimbabwe has not been resolved in post-independent Zimbabwe. Additionally, Choto does not clearly handle the issue of how women were part of the land redistribution matrix. The peasants who occupy Dereki’s farm do that as families and women access land not as individuals but together with their husbands. Choto wrote after the implementation of the government sponsored resettlement programme and demonstrates that this reform process was very slow that is why people like VaKanyuchi and VaChimoto together with their families had to spontaneously occupy Dereki’s farm in order to fulfil the aspirations and goals of the liberation struggle. Also, the first land reform exercise allocated land to the household head who was presumed to be male and women only accessed land through their husbands. Also Jeri who is married to Tsitsi Bango is the one who is presumed to own the Christon Bank plot they have bought as husband and wife. Furthermore, Tumirai also owns the land and their house in the Grange. Despite independence men still own land and are still in charge of making decisions over the land resource and women can only benefit from the land through their male kindred in privately owned farms.

Choto demonstrates what Bhebhe (2000) has noted that women still access land through their male kindred even in the post-independent land reform programmes that are being conducted after signing international declarations that promote women’s access to resources, land

included. Even in the first phase of the land reform, the government sponsored resettlement programme women still access land through their husbands because land was allocated to household head of the family who was presumed to be male. Even though the land was owned by the government, the lessee was the male figure head and not the woman. Hence Bhebe has correctly noted how colonially imposed traditions have further marginalised women from accessing the land resource in their own right. Even though men did not hold a title deed to the land in the first phase of the reform programme, the permits for lease were written in their names and it was the male figurehead who had the power to make decisions on that piece of allocated land and not the woman (Goebel, 2005; Jacobs, 1996, 2000; Mafa, et. al. 2015).

Choto vividly demonstrates that women have further been marginalised in land ownership. Unlike the traditional way of ownership in which land was collectively owned and women could access it through their husbands and men through their wives the new western form of ownership with title deeds or lease agreements has further marginalised women from owning the land resource. Nothing has worked in women's favour despite the numerous declarations that Zimbabwe is signatory to that promote gender equity in access to and ownership of resources. Despite being aware of the emotive nature of the land issue Choto does not uphold for equitable distribution of land by gender, he focuses on redressing the racial imbalances, women's ownership of land is subsumed in male ownership. This explains why Mrs Chimoto a woman who has also participated in taking over Dereki's farm has no power over the decision making of the farm. She understands these colonial injustices in land ownership and even questions Comrade Nhamoyetsoka's war credentials for he seemed unaware of the main reason or goal for embarking on the liberation struggle. Unlike women in the pre-colonial period who had power to make decisions over their own *tseu*, small portions of land which they were given to, Mrs Chimoto has no power to make decisions over the occupied farm; this is done by the male gender.

One academic-cum-critic has also corroborated Choto's presentation of gender and land ownership and argues that:

However, Choto's women still own land in the traditional way, since they own the grabbed land through their husbands Chimoto and Kanyuchi. It seems Kanyuchi and Chimoto are more knowledgeable than their wives on what is governing land matters in post-independence Zimbabwe. They relate issues of constitutionalism to land matters. They view the Lancaster Constitution as a centrifugal force to land redistribution. One feels that the writer should also equip women with such visions so that they can link cause and effect in their struggle for land ownership (Field Notes, July 2016).

Thus as writer Choto should also have empowered women in owning and accessing the land resource as happened in the pre-colonial period in which they had power over their *tseu*. These women have participated in the war together with men but are still being side-lined in enjoying the national cake, they do not enjoy the private ownership of land which is signified by the title deeds of Jeri and Tumirai's land properties and the lease agreements in the resettlement areas. As a result Choto's work further buttresses women's deprivation of land while some few men enjoy private ownership of land, this reinforces patriarchal ownership tendencies which have been influenced by Victorian values. In the traditional set up there was no private ownership of land, both men and women had collective ownership. Furthermore, both genders relied on the other gender on land allocation.

Bhebhe (2000) has also noted how the colonial dispensation seems to have misunderstood the role that women played in land allocation in traditional times. Colonial period seems to put more emphasis on women accessing through men forgetting the other dimension that also men were only allocated land after they got married. The way women access land in colonial and post-colonial times has been influenced by Victorian values, that is only women who get land through men and the other gender does not need women to get land. This change in land access and ownership is neatly captured by Bhebhe when he states that:

Colonialism and African patriarchy colluded to debauch African culture and tradition to the disadvantage of women. This corrupted tradition has survived to our own times and its negative effects can be clearly detected in our land reform programme where women are marginally treated and benefit mostly as dependents of men. Women being the backbone of our rural economy on which the vast majority of our people depend, their incapacitation through such corrupted use of our culture can only hold back the transformation of our rural communities and, in turn, stultify the overall development of our motherland (Bhebhe, 2000: 14).

Thus, despite independence and the advocacy for gender equality women's role in influencing men's allocation of land as in pre-colonial times has not been reinstated. This

explains why VaChimoto, VaKanyuchi, Jeri and Tumirai are presented as the land owners despite the fact that they have wives whose presence is unacknowledged in terms of the western form of ownership with title deeds and lease agreements in the name of the male member of the family.

5.5.3 A Summary of the selected fictional Works on Early Resettlement, Disillusionment, Betrayal and Spontaneous Peasant Land Occupations

Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo (1985) and *Vavairo* (1990) have vividly captured the betrayal, spontaneous farm occupations and disillusionment that characterised the post-independence period. These fictional works present the mismatch between the war promises and what actually materialised in the post-independence period. The farms, fertile land that peasants, both men and women had been promised during the war had not materialised. Both fictional works demonstrate that peasants are not hapless victims but take it upon themselves to chart their own destiny by spontaneously occupying farms. Both authors are very bold for writing about government's failure to redress the colonially induced racial and gender injustices in land ownership during a time when it was still considered taboo to do so. Both authors have also highlighted the government's hypocrisy in safeguarding white ownership of property at the expense of the black majority who fought the liberation struggle.

Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo and *Vavairo* are both set in the first phase of the resettlement programme and have demonstrated how women have been marginalized by the new western form of ownership. This form of ownership is now different from the traditional one in which both men and women collectively owned land, they both accessed it through the other gender. In the new dispensation with title deeds and lease agreements women seem to be sidelined because the title deed and the lease agreement or the land permit are in the man's name. It is men who make the decisions on a piece of land unlike in the past where women also made decisions over certain pieces of land. Women in both fictional works have user rights and do not have main decision-making rights on the land they have spontaneously occupied. Tinazvo in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* the patriarch of the family allocates land to new occupants and it is mainly men that are allocated this land and the new land allocators unlike the chiefs in the traditional African culture do not check if the prospective land owner is married; a prerequisite in traditional forms of accessing land by men. More so, in *Vavairo*, VaChimoto

and VaKanyuchi are in charge of running the allocation of land business on the newly acquired farm. Thus women like Mrs Chimoto and Mrs Kanyuchi are only accessing the repossessed farm through their husbands. Thus even though both men and women still do not own land in the correct sense of the word, since the land still belongs to the white colonial master, women have been further deprived of the significant role they played in colonial times of determining men's allocation of land by the chief. Men could only get land after they got married. The way women access land in colonial and post-colonial times has usurped this major role that they played. The rights they enjoyed in pre-colonial times in which they determined the right of men to be allocated land by the chief have been eroded.

Both fictional works have also highlighted the use of brutal force by government to evict the new settlers from the white owned farms. Accordingly, they have demonstrated that nothing has really changed in post-independent Zimbabwe. Only flag independence has been achieved and there is no economic independence. Both authors show women's involvement in taking over land but emphasise that both men and women still do not own land for it still belongs to the white colonial masters. In a similar fashion, even in the resettlement areas, men do not own land but it is owned by the government, and men are only lessees, they have land permits and women can access it through their husbands. The slow land redistribution process and spontaneous peasant land occupations that characterised early independence period in *Vavairo* and *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* failed to fulfil the peasants' aspirations; they were still disillusioned. The disillusionment set in because those who had occupied farms were evicted and those who were resettled did not get the best of farm lands. Moreso, the slow nature of the reform process expedited the new form of land reform which has been aptly named the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) or *jambanja* (radical seizure of land). The following section discusses Mutasa's *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* which is set at the backdrop of the FTLRP. The novel has also moved a step further by boldly discussing both gender and racial injustices in land ownership.

5.5.4 Fast Track Land Reform and Gender Justice in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*

Sekai Minda Tave Nayo marks a new dispensation in land ownership. Earlier works that have been discussed set in all the historical periods that the nation has evolved through plainly present women as accessing land through their male relatives. It is only *Sekai Minda Tave*

Nayo which has taken a very bold stance in depicting women as owners of land in their own right. Women in the novel also own land in the western sense of the word in which they also have land permits, title deeds and lease agreements in their own names. In the novel, Mutasa goes beyond redressing social injustice and tackles the much side-lined issue of gender justice which the earlier land reform processes in Zimbabwe had not properly addressed. He has given the subject of gender and land reform comprehensive coverage, a thing which has never been done by most Zimbabwean authors of fiction who write in both English and Shona who just mention the issue in passing. Mutasa has also gone a step further to reinstate women ownership rights which had been stripped by colonialism and Victorian entrenched legislations. In his novel Mutasa has accorded women the right to make decisions on and also the right to have land permits in their own names.

Mutasa's commitment to redressing gender inequalities in land ownership in the novel can be easily picked from the title of the novel, *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* which when loosely translated means that 'laugh or rejoice we now have the land.' It is the story of Sekai, a young unmarried woman who has acquired land under the land reform programme in her own right. Mutasa actually targets women who have been side-lined in land ownership. Mutasa's point of view and stance is captured by his sympathies for women reflected in his main character Sekai. The story emphasises that it is the story of Sekai (Sekai:) and how she acquired land. She therefore becomes a symbol of all the womenfolk. The title captures that derisive laughter that has previously met any demands for land by women in particular and the black Zimbabwean in general. This is the same kind of laughter that is captured in Thomas Mapfumo's song "Maiti kurima hamubviri." (You used to say you are very good at farming). Thus Mutasa is demonstrating that the real farmer on the continent, the woman has finally acquired land in her own right. It is the woman who tills the land. *Badza*, a hoe is synonymous with a woman and according the real farmer the opportunity to acquire land in the western sense in her own right should be applauded. This means that having the lease or permit drawn in her own name as the land reform beneficiary is a very great step towards empowering women to own and access resources in their own right.

The tone of the title demonstrates that despite the failure to have the requisite farming implements the black Zimbabwean women are rejoicing that they have finally repossessed

the land that had been expropriated from them. In the same breath women now also own land as depicted in Sekai's song;

Sekai!
Minda tave nayo!
Vasikana simukai mushaine
Ino inguva yenyu
Sekai chiedza unacho
Handei tinorima
Kwete kupemha
Kwete kumirira food aid
Kuti tigoitwa nhapwa
Chitarisai mberi... (p. 137)

(Rejoice
We now own agricultural land
Girls rise up and shine
For this is your occasion
Let us go and farm
We do not want to beg
We say no to food aid
For such comes with its own captivity
We now have to look forward)

Through this song Mutasa amply demonstrates the euphoric nature of black Zimbabweans, especially women, who have also been given the opportunity to own land through the government-sponsored FTLRP. Previous forms of land ownership deprived women of this opportunity and placed all the power to do with land on the male head of the family. FTLRP has marked the dawn of new era in which women can gladly own land. These women are now being encouraged to work very hard and produce so that they do not rely on donor aid, for such aid normally comes with certain requirements that can leave a whole nation in perpetual bondage to the donor.

Apart from gender justice, Mutasa gives a holistic picture of the FTLRP in which people from different age groups, ethnic groups, classes and political parties have benefited from the programme. Unlike Choto in *Vavariro*, who presents the main beneficiaries of land in post-independent Zimbabwe as the elite like Tumirai, Jeri and Nhamoyesoka, Mutasa's FTLRP is more encompassing for it includes women and people from various walks of life. Furthermore, Mutasa does not blindly eulogise the FTLRP but also goes a step further to "expose the anomalies and challenges which characterised the reform process" (Mupondi, 2015: 184). He does not end by highlighting the challenges of the reform process but goes a step further to proffer some possible intervention strategies in order to overcome the challenges of the FTLRP in Zimbabwe.

Mutasa highlights, through Sekai's debate sessions at Silveira Secondary School in Bikita, the importance of single women benefiting from the land reform programme. During the debating session Sekai says that even if a woman is single she has the right to be allocated land as an individual (p.20). He goes against the initial trend that women benefited through their husbands or fathers, and enunciates the importance of women benefiting in their own right. He corrects the gender injustice that was glaringly conspicuous in the first phase of the reform mode of selecting beneficiaries who were supposed to be men; and women could only benefit as wives or widows (Jacobs, 1996, 2001; Goebel, 2005a, 2005b). She says, "*Zvatichatarisa ndezvokuti murume nomukadzi mupiwe minda iri pedyo napedyo*" (p.118). (We will consider that husband and wife should be allocated farms that are adjacent to each other). Previously married women could only access land through their husbands but now Mutasa calls for gender justice in which even married women can access land in their own right without relying on their husbands in order to own land.

Moreso Mutasa vividly depicts gender justice by according single women the right to own land in the FTLRP. Single women were disadvantaged in the previous forms of land ownership that had prevailed in colonial and post-colonial periods, for they were never referred to in the first phase of the reform process. Since they had no husbands, they had been totally marginalised in accessing land yet they were also household heads in some families. Mutasa's FTLRP is inclusive of single women. This is brought out through Sekai who says, "*Madzimai, zvisinei kuti mudzimai akaroorwa here kana kuti kwete, ngaapiwe pokurima*

kana achida” (p. 20). (Women, irrespective of whether they are married or not, should be allocated land in their own right if they do so wish to farm). Mutasa through Sekai’s statement depicts FTLRP as open to both men and women, no person should be marginalised by gender, both women whether married or not should also receive land in the same vein as men. Mutasa brings out a new form of ownership which is more encompassing and accommodative of single women. The previous land ownership systems were determined by the marriage institution but Mutasa is advocating for gender justice even to single women and not focusing on married ones alone.

In addition to depicting female land reform beneficiaries through debating sessions, Mutasa goes further to present women who have benefited from the FTLRP in their own right. Mai Chakurira fights vigorously so that she is allocated land in the former freedom fighters’ designated area which is near the road and is very fertile. She challenges the ex-freedom fighter who is allocating land that women just like men equally participated in the struggle and therefore rightly deserve land in the good areas as well. This is brought out where Comrade Shinda says, “*Vakomana makomuredhi, ipai amai vedu ava apo, paseri pomunda wako Tonderai. Endai munonyatsovapegera tibve tangopedza navo...Kana paine anenge ati anoda kukutorerai ipapa, tumai mwana wenyu azondidaidza* (pp. 37-38). (Colleagues, comrades, please allocate land to our mother close to Tonderai’s farm. Please go and properly peg a piece of land for her so that we are done with her once and for all...If there is anyone who wants to wrestle the land away from you, please send your child to call me and I will deal with that person). Mutasa gives women like mai Chakurira the agency to fight for their land; she does not take the former freedom fighters’ word that better land which is by the roadside belongs to ex-combatants. Her name Chakurira, which literally means that which has defeated, is symbolic for she has defeated the whole biased system of land allocation and the western influenced patriarchal ownership system which marginalised women. She, like mai Chimoto in *Vavariro*, questions the credentials of the former freedom fighters who seem not to know the immense role played by women during the struggle. Eventually, mai Chakurira qualifies to get land even in the reserved ex-combatants area. Mai Chakurira challenges the ex-freedom fighter who is allocating land and the whole system of allocating land which marginalises women forgetting the significant role they played during the struggle both as fellow combatants and also as the very people who fed these guerrillas during the war (p. 37).

In supporting the role that women played during the struggle as espoused by Mai Chakurira, Staunton (1990) goes to great length in demonstrating the responsibility that women who were not guerrillas played during the war. They fed the freedom fighters, gave them medicines and clothes at the expense of their lives and marriages. They took great risks since the Smith regime did not tolerate this and they could pay heavily once they were caught doing that (Staunton, 1990). Hence Mutasa's women like Mai Chakurira do not take the ex-combatants' ways of discrimination against women lying down when it comes to the real sharing of the national cake. They rise up to fight for what rightfully belongs to them. Mai Chakurira demonstrates the importance of married women owning land on an individual basis; the land she is allocated is for her individual self and not with her husband; she is not a dependent in the FTLRP. She symbolically represents all married women that they can now access land in their own right in the FTLRP, they do not access it through their husbands as happened in the first phase of the land reform programme.

Mutasa also demonstrates the women's benefits from the A2 commercialised model of the FTLRP through Sekai. Sekai gets a bigger farm for commercial purposes. Sekuru Gwariro says referring to Sekai's farm, "*Takamboedza. Chete tinongosiyana chete pakuti purazi renyu iguru iri. Asi, haa, takamborima. Hwindimiri dzandaona pano penyu idzi ndakadzimikawo mupurazi mangu* (p. 122). (We tried. The only difference is that your farm is bigger than mine. But we tried to farm productively. These windmills I have seen on your farm I also have them at my farm). Mutasa depicts a woman who has been allocated a bigger farm, and *sekuru* Gwariro attests to the gigantic size of Sekai's farm. People who benefited in the A2 model had to show capability of being able to run the farms in terms of inputs, knowhow and even financial resources. The fact that Sekai was allocated an A2 farm visibly presents women's ability to manage and sponsor such big farms. Through such characters, Mutasa is giving a picture of women's ability to handle such big farms. Therefore, they need not be marginalised for they are able as clearly demonstrated by Sekai.

Furthermore, Sekai does not only keep the land idle but she successfully works on her farm and becomes a very prominent farmer such that she even surpasses men who have also

benefited from the land reform programme. Mutasa equips women with the expertise to successfully run these new farms. Sekai's success in managing her farm is brought out where Upenyu says in his letter to Zakariya:

Mabhazi maviri akazatora vanhu ndokuenda navo kupurazi raSekai. Zvatakaona ikoko manana chaiwo mumwe wangu. Ndakaseka pakanzi navamwe vakuru vataiva navo, "Ko, nhai imi, mukadzi here uyu akarima zvakadai? Ko zvariri bhunu chairo! Kurima here uku?" Tese takapihwa chibage chakanga chabikwa. Takataridzwa munda waSekai. Iweka, hazvitauro! Akatitaurira kuti zvaakanga achiri kuchikoro aichengeta mariyebhezari iyo inova yaakazoshandisa kutenga tarakita nemimwe midziyo yokurimisa. Akatiudzazve kuti vanhu vazhinji vanoti kana vapiwa mari yebhezari vanoipedzera yose mumafaro (p. 121).

(Two buses ferried people to Sekai's farm. What we saw there was a real miracle my dear. I just chuckled to myself when one elderly man whom we had gone with said, "Excuse me, is it a woman who worked on this farm and produced abundantly like this? Is not she a like a real Boer when it comes to farming?" We were all given cooked mealies to eat during our visit. We were shown Sekai's farm. Some of these things are inexplicable! She told us that whilst she was still at university in the United States of America, she saved her bursary money and through that she managed to purchase a tractor and other farming equipment on her farm. She also told us that most bursary recipients spent their money on frivolous things like entertaining themselves whilst they were there in the United States)

Mutasa depicts through Sekai, successful women land reform beneficiaries who are using the land productively. The people who have been ferried to Sekai's farm see it for themselves that she is a successful farmer, and also they witness the farming equipment like tractors that this woman has acquired that enables her to farm on a commercial basis. Images of a Boer and male farmer are insinuated into the discourse to demonstrate Sekai's success. The land reform beneficiaries were believed to be men whose success was measured against a benchmark set by white people who could farm and produce bumper harvests as does Sekai. Mutasa presents women as very responsible farmers; Sekai did not squander her bursary money in petty things as did other scholarship beneficiaries but she used it wisely in investing for her future farm. This proves that productive use of land is not the preserve of men only but women like Sekai as well.

Through Sekai, Mutasa demonstrates that unlike men who have this propensity to amass wealth to enrich their ego and are not practically using the land they have taken over, Sekai physically works on her land. There is more talk on the part of men, the novel does not really

present them tilling the land, but it is the women like Sekai who are presented as making meaningful contributions with the land they have acquired. Sekai is able to do so because women in Africa are the tillers of the land, as stated earlier on, the hoe, *badza* is synonymous with a woman. Thus women like Sekai have also quickly adjusted to the highly mechanised equipment like tractors that is used to make farming on a bigger scale easier and lighter. Since women are used to do the physical farming of the land themselves, Sekai drives the tractor on her farm because it is women's nature to till the land and not just to delegate and become overseers of the work done on the land.

It can be argued that if women can successfully produce as Sekai does, there is no need to leave them out in the land reform process. Allocating women land reduces poverty, creates jobs and improves the status of women (Manjengwa, et. al. 2013). Furthermore, when women are allocated land it improves the livelihoods of communities since women's proceeds normally benefit the whole family and not the individual (Ellis, 2000; Gudhlanga & Chirimuuta, 2010). Some academics-cum-critics have also affirmed the importance of empowering women through the land reform exercise as happens to Sekai. They state that:

It is clear from Shona fiction that lessening of social inequalities between men and women reduces poverty, raises farm efficiency and improves natural resource management. They also show that once women are empowered, the quality of life of their households improves. *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* shows that there is no direct discrimination against women on land ownership in Zimbabwe since they are allowed to access land and are also free to apply for land under AI or A2 models. It is apparent that patriarchal tendencies and customary traditions which discriminate women on land ownership can be conquered. Education empowers women to fight for their rights to land ownership thereby strengthening them economically (Field Notes, June 2016)

Sekai Minda Tave Nayo now shows that when the racial imbalances have been fought against and removed there is then need even to fight patriarchal attitudes that result in imbalance in land ownership by gender and yet women contribute so immensely to the family well-being (Field Notes, April 2016).

Thus through accessing land in the government sponsored FTLRP, it can be concluded that women have transformed the livelihoods of their communities. Sekai builds a very beautiful house for her father (p. 92), and at the end of the novel she is also in the process of building a house for her aunt (p. 95). In addition Sekai also commits to paying school fees for her late brother, Joramu's children (p. 98). As a result Mutasa clearly demonstrates the economic

benefits that accrue to society by empowering women through education and the land reform programme; these economic benefits cascade to the whole family, thus improving livelihoods.

The success of female beneficiaries of the FTLRP is also attested by Manjengwa et. al. (2013) who aver that, “Women have made important gains from tobacco and from land reform in general. According to the Zimbabwe Association of Women Tobacco Farmers, one third of the tobacco producers are women, who produce about a quarter of the crop.” Mutasa therefore clearly demonstrates through Sekai that female land reform beneficiaries are performing much better than male beneficiaries and thus they should be given land for they are equally capable if not better. Furthermore, the number of farm employees has increased from 167 000 before FTLRP to 1 million in post FTLRP (Manjengwa, et. al. 2013). Since women form the bulk of farm labourers it means that they have also gained in the whole land reform process.

To further buttress the fact that women should own land in their own right, Mutasa uses Sekai’s speech when she meets representatives of various land reform beneficiaries from the whole country in Gweru. She says:

...munhurume nomunhukadzi makangoenzana. Muzive kuti vakadzi vave nemasimba okutonga nokutungamirirawo. Saka izvozvi musadzvanyirira mukadzi wenyu. Ane kodzero dzakewo! Zvino kana zvadai, mabva matondisvitsazve pane imwe nyaya yandanga ndichazotaura. Inzwai, hama dzangu, kana munhukadzi achida kugariswa patsva, achidawo munda, ane kodzero yokupiwa munda wake sezvakangoitawo munhurume. Tichaonawo kuti madzimai atopiwa minda munyika muno. Tinozvia kuti vamwe vavo vanorima kudarika varume (p. 117).

(... men and women are equal. Please be aware that women now also have powers to rule and lead. So right now please do not oppress your wives. For they also have their own rights! As it now stands you have now taken me to another issue that I intended to talk about at a much later stage. Hearken my dear friends and colleagues; if a woman wants to land under the FTLRP, she has a right to get that land just like men. We will see to it that women have been allocated land under the reform programme in this country. We are well aware that some of them are better famers than men).

Through Sekai’s mini-lecture on human rights that also recognises women’s rights, Mutasa addresses the gender injustices in terms of land ownership. Sekai’s persuasive speech actually

invokes people's undivided attention when she says, *Inzwai, hama dzangu*. (Listen my dear friends and relatives). Mutasa is aware that the patriarchal society that Sekai is addressing does not believe in women owning land in their own right for some men say, "*Chotaurwa pano chave chiRungu chichatiparadza ichi* (p. 117). (What is being talked about here are western values which will destroy our cultural values). Therefore Mutasa calls for everyone's exclusive attention by calling upon them to seriously listen to these new democratic principles of human rights that accord women the same status as men in all facets of life including access and ownership of land.

Mutasa boldly discusses gender justice in land reform which had been side-lined by earlier land reform processes which had mainly focused on redressing the racial imbalances in land ownership. As an author, he puts at the pedestal rectification of the gender injustices in land ownership in his novel. He fulfils what Zvobgo cited in Ngara and Morrison (1989:3) believes an author of fiction should do; he says, "I would urge you as teachers of literature and language to put the wisdom of your pens and voices at the services of the uncompleted liberation struggle in our region and continent." Mutasa as an author is aware of the "unfinished business" (Rautopoulus, 2004) in the Zimbabwean land reclamation struggle and he focuses on redressing these injustices that had not been immediately tackled at independence. Magosvongwe has also noted Mutasa's bold stance in advocating for gender justice in the FTLRP. She argues that, "Within the same stride, Mutasa also exposes an emancipated African womanhood. In the drive for indigenous economic empowerment through land redistribution, women can own land in their individual capacities as exemplified by mai Chakurira and Sekai" (Magosvongwe, 2009: 90). This kind of literature which is transformative in nature should be encouraged, for it gives women the agency to fight for their rightful position in as far as land ownership is concerned. Such works of art discourage passive docility but raise consciousness and awareness in both men and women on the fact that both men and women can equally own and manage land properly.

Most respondents in the study hailed Mutasa's handling of the gender and land ownership debate in his novel. They argue that through Mutasa's prowess in handling gender justice, Shona literature has developed qualitatively for it now handles such critical issues. On responding to the question if Shona literature (such as *Sekai Minda Tava Nayo* and

Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe) has developed qualitatively in regard to handling issues like gender and land ownership, most responses applaud Mutasa's novel and approach of empowering women in a male-dominated society and aver that:

Somehow the answer is 'Yes.' *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* marks one of the latest literary creations that treat gender and land ownership. It is laudable that the author equips women with agency and the right type of aggression to fight for land ownership. The women he created are not docile like Chakaipa's women in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* who are contend with their wretched state after Vhuka slaughters a cow for them. Some of Chakaipa's women like mai Mhirimo enjoy farming in the barren areas and accept their fate. That is unlike Sekai, mai Chakurira and a whole group of women who assemble where Comrade Shinda is allocating land. These women feel it is high time that they should resist the Tribal Trust Lands as a home of black women. There is an improvement on the level of quality of Shona fiction" (Field Notes, July 2016).

Different as they are, literary works that treat gender and land ownership give some lessons to the reader. In the first place, a novel like *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*, unlocks women's effort and agency to grab land for their benefit. They are agents of change to colonial-cum-patriarchal principles and legal instruments that deter women from fighting for their right to own land. *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* also marks how much women can work in manners that contract State policies that can block them from success. Sekai looks West when the government is calling for the "Look East Policy" in doing so, she becomes quite successful. In that way she upholds what Mazrui (2002) has called diversification. Diversification calls for Africa to learn from different traditions and cultures of the world to score success in the different fronts of their societies. It speaks against borrowing views from one tradition and culture (Field Notes, July 2016).

With particular reference to *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* the novel did quite well to address the issue of gender especially how women were marginalised. He also reflects on the potential women have in relation to farming. The issues related to gender and land ownership are analysed in the context of history (Field Notes, February 2016).

Mutasa therefore puts women at the centre of charting their own destiny; they are not passive but are actively involved in determining their own destiny. From an Africana Womanist and Afrocentric point of view, both women and men should not be at the margins of their own history but should be at the centre. Accordingly, by presenting such women who are actively involved in the land reform process, Mutasa's women exude African womanhood which does not support inert passivity but promotes agency in whatever will be happening in their lives. These women are not objects that have to be acted upon and have decisions made for them in as far as land ownership is concerned but they take an active role in participating in the whole land reform exercise. Furthermore, Mutasa is an author who seems to have seen the potential

that women have when it comes to farming. He is the only author who has greatly demonstrated that in Africa the farmer is a woman and hence should be empowered in land ownership.

In addition, another respondent also stated that “Indeed *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* diversifies and broadens readers’ awareness of the need to be more inclusive in terms of gender. It shows the woman as a key stakeholder in the polity’s development matrix. By extension, it challenges policy makers to revisit the issue of gender in land redistribution (Field notes, April 2016). Women like Sekai are actively involved in land reform. Even Mai Chakurira also attends the meeting in Gweru in which representatives of land reform beneficiaries from all over the country have assembled. Her husband also goes to the meeting but Mai Chakurira also attends the meeting as an equal recipient of land in her own right. Mutasa highlights the fact that the policy makers and government should not do business as usual but should take a paradigm shift and also consider women as potential land reform beneficiaries. The state stands to benefit if it takes such an approach.

Moreso, Mutasa bestows upon women the role of being prominent stakeholders in the whole land reform discourse. He makes Sekai an ambassador of the government-sponsored FTLRP, who has to justify why the country had to take such a move to people like Johnson who represents the west; who are quick to condemn the manner in which the land reform exercise was handled. Sekai expertly rationalises the radical seizure of land to Johnson when she briefly narrates the history of expropriation of land by whites in Zimbabwe (pp. 45-56). She explains to him that Zimbabweans were just regaining their land which had been forcibly taken away from them through colonial legislations like the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Land Husbandry Act of 1951 (p.46). She also elucidates to Johnson how Smith under his Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) period forcibly moved indigenous people from their land and parcelled it out to white veterans of the Second World War (p. 48). In addition she highlights to Johnson that most western countries own land in Zimbabwe and yet there are no black people who own such large tracts of land in western countries (p. 49). She also makes clear how the Lancaster house constitution prevented indigenous people from taking over their land soon after independence (p. 51). Lastly she spells out to Johnson how Britain did not own up in paying for the land reform programme at the 1998 Donors’

Conference as had been agreed during the Lancaster House negotiations in 1979. It is through this history that Sekai justifies the government's policy of radical seizure of land which was practised during the FTLRP.

Magosvongwe (2009: 89) has also noted Sekai's role in defending the government sponsored FTLRP. She professes that "Sekai gives an expose of the major landmarks in Zimbabwe's political economy of land in her defence of the government's land reform programme." Mutasa has been hailed for bringing in fresh ideas on empowering women on critical issues like land. Most respondents welcomed his boldness in taking such a stance in a patriarchal society, heavily entrenched by Victorian values and would not easily welcome such an idea. Some respondents hail this approach and state that:

Sekai Minda Tave Nayo shows a refreshing reversal of gender roles with a woman as the main character guiding men on land issues. The novel has shown the central role women have in agricultural activities in Zimbabwe which is an indication of the need to consider change of the attitude towards gender roles (Field Notes, June 2016).

Sekai Minda Tave Nayo demonstrates a substantial and spontaneous growth of Shona literature with authors exhibiting maturity in their writings. It is pleasing to note that literature is put to the service of collective struggle in which men and women are in it together. Land ownership is no longer a preserve of men something which a traceable feature of the patriarchal Victorian society.

The respondents welcome Mutasa's approach of empowering a woman to teach the whole society about land reform. They take it as a reversal of gender roles but seem to have forgotten that women in African culture had the role of socialising the young into their societies through narration of folktales. They were the traditionally attested teachers of their communities. Thus Mutasa in taking a woman to teach the whole community is conforming to tradition which has accepted them as good teachers already as evidenced in folktale narration. In order for the land reform programme to be well understood and succeed Mutasa finds it befitting to use the traditional teachers in parting his message to the community. Not only is Sekai bestowed with the role of teaching the Zimbabwean community but she is also made the ambassador of the FTLRP in foreign countries like the United States of America.

In addition, Mutasa confers upon Sekai the right to head the unit that deals with land reform in the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Resettlement. Sekai moves around the country to

educate and emphasise what the government sponsored FTLRP is all about. This gigantic task is given to a woman as a way of assisting change of attitudes of the people she interacts with in her work so that they can appreciate that women can perform those duties that have been reserved for men in the land reform exercise. To this effect another respondent said:

Sekai Minda Tave Nayo shows a refreshing reversal of gender roles with a woman as the main character guiding men on land issues. The novel has shown the central role women have in agricultural activities in Zimbabwe which is an indication of the need to consider change of the attitude towards gender roles (Field notes, April 2016).

By according women like Sekai that central role in the land reform programme, Mutasa has managed to bridge the gap between a farmer in Africa who is a woman and the person who owns and makes decisions on the land resource. Over the years women have only tilled the land with no power to make decisions over that land. Putting Sekai in that pivotal role Mutasa reverses this and is educating the Zimbabwean populace that women can lead even men in making crucial decisions on how land should be managed and preserved.

Mutasa has not only narrated why women have been marginalised in accessing and owning resources like land but has brought to the fore the factors that marginalised women in society. He elucidates how the patriarchal culture deprived women of opportunities to get educated and consequently left them out of a number of empowerment projects because they were not educated. The patriarchal belief of depriving the girl-child education is brought out in Matirasa's (Sekai's sister) letter to their aunt who has taken her to the urban area to attend school:

Hapadyiwi rinopisa. Nyaya ndeyaSekai. Kwanzi makatora mwana pano muchida kuti anoita mukadzi wamaticha. Zvanzi Sekai ngaadzoke izvozvi azorima. Vati ndiani murume angazoroora simbe isingagoni kubata badza? Chikoro ndechavakomana. Baba vati kana Sekai achida kupinda chikoro achazopinzwa nomurume wake. Vati kupinza Sekai chikoro kurasa mari. Kana akashanda saticha, kana nesi, kana basa ripi zvaro, haazodzosi mari yavo. Upfumi hwokurasa nokuti anozoriritira varume vake isu tave marombe (p. 14).

All is not well at home because of Sekai. It is said you took her to school to be sexually abused by teachers. Father says that Sekai should come back forthwith so that she could till the fields. He argues that what kind of a husband would like to marry a lazy person who cannot even handle a hoe? Schooling is for boys. Father states that if Sekai really wants to go to school she will be sent to school by her husband. He said sending Sekai to school is a mere waste of resources. This is because when she works as a teacher, or nurse, or any other form of employment, she

will not be able to pay back his money. It is wasting resources because she will be assisting her husband's family at the expense of her maiden family.)

Sekai's father who represents the patriarchal head of the family deprives Sekai of the opportunity to get educated for he thinks that it is a mere waste of resources. Sekai's father's statement also brings out the crucial fact that in Africa the woman is a farmer, "Vati ndiani murume angazoorora simbe isingagoni kubata badza?" (He argues that what kind of a husband would like to marry a lazy person who cannot even handle a hoe?). This amply demonstrates women's affinity with farming for it is unheard of if a woman cannot till the land. Mungoshi also echoes the same sentiments in the story "Sacrifice" where one of the characters says educating a girl is like throwing money into Munyati River. Mutasa uses another woman, Sekai's aunt to rescue Sekai from the predicament that her father has condemned her to. Mutasa's women demonstrates the agency to overcome patriarchal practices that want to block them from achieving their goals. Sekai through her aunt is able to acquire an education. It is another woman, Sekai's aunt, who takes her away to Harare where she gets an education which enables her to get the ministry job. Mutasa reveals that if women are given equal opportunities with men they can compete on an equal basis on the job market and can also have control over decision making that concerns crucial resources like land and better the lives of many.

One respondent has also observed Mutasa's dexterity in empowering women and asserts that:

Mutasa has highlighted the background issues related to gender based discrimination influencing land ownership. It is clear from the book that women have been disadvantaged because of patriarchy, customary law and the inheritance. Women in Zimbabwe have throughout history accessed land through men. This shows that the traditional system does not guarantee security of tenure for land owned by widows, single women and divorced women (Field notes, March, 2016).

Such an understanding seems to misconstrue African traditional culture which accorded security of tenure to different groups of women. It is only the encroachment of Victorian values which stripped women of the right they formerly enjoyed as far as land ownership is concerned. Codified customary law with heavily entrenched with Victorian values is now being taken to represent African traditional culture which governed traditional ways of

owning and accessing land (Schmidt, 1990, 1992; Gudhlanga, 2013). The impact of colonialism on African culture is highlighted in some of the responses:

You find some of the writers blaming Shona culture for the inequalities without necessarily highlighting the aspects of the culture which empowered not only men but women as well. Some are not aware of the ways through which colonialism disempowered the black people (both men and women). Some have a tendency to romanticise Shona traditional gender roles in a bid to create a perfect past. I am therefore of the opinion that most writers do not give a balanced version.

Consequently, Mutasa is not quick to condemn women or Shona culture but has deciphered the root cause of the problem, colonialism which connived with African traditional values to produce codified customary law which then made it possible to deprive women of the essential benefits like education they formerly enjoyed before colonialism. Mutasa has identified the reasons why women cannot equally participate with men in critical national issues and gives the background of the socio-cultural values that prevent women from doing so. He amply demonstrates that it is the African traditional values that have been heavily entrenched by Victorian values that deprive women of the security of tenure in land. In traditional African society both men and women got the requisite education to sustain their communities, it is only deprivation of western education which seems to put women at the lower end of the social stratum. Once Mutasa identifies the problem he is therefore, able to provide a solution by sending Sekai to school where she gets empowered and can equally participate with men in the A2 land reform scheme which was mainly for people with the requisite resources to manage such big pieces of land.

Apart from gender justice in land reform, *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* gives a holistic picture of the FTLRP, not only women benefited in their own right but the youths, some whites, members of the opposition party and peasants in general. Mupondi has observed the more encompassing nature of Mutasa's FTLRP and maintains that:

The novel indicates that blacks across class, gender, ethnic and age divides were recipients of land under the land reform programme. For example the following were among the people who were allocated land: Shinda a war veteran, Sekai who later becomes a government official in the Ministry of Land and Agriculture, Mai Chakurira a peasant woman, Tazviona a peasant farmer, and Upenyu and Zakaria, young men who are later formerly employed (Mupondi, 2015: 188).

Over and above these beneficiaries cited by Mupondi, members of the opposition parties also benefited (p. 62), those based in the diaspora like sekuru Gwariro they too got land (p. 79). Sekai also draws people's attention to the fact that even people of foreign origin should also benefit from the land reform programme (p. 118). Mutasa therefore paints a picture of the holistic nature of the government's land reform programme which endeavours to empower people from all walks of life with the critical resource of land irrespective of their background, ethnicity, age and gender.

In *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*, Mutasa does not only end at eulogising the FTLRP but goes further to discuss the challenges that marred this exercise. Of significance is the emergence of social classes that want to further marginalise women from the land reform exercise. Tirongo, a young man who is assisting in the pegging of land says to Mai Chakurira, "*Amai, nemi mose makamira pamumvuri apo muchapiwa kuseri uko! Kuno ndokwamakomuredhi*" (p. 36). (You woman, and all of you who are waiting under the shade you will be allocated land over there behind that small mountain. This fertile land is for the comrades). Fertile lands and areas that are close to roads and are easily accessible are now being set aside for the ex-combatants. The parcelling out of land in the FTLRP is carried out by men, ex-freedom fighters and the youths like Tirongo who want to further marginalise women from accessing resources like land. Instead they want to push women to the peripheries that are not easily accessible. Despite the FTLRP being open to everyone there were some elements like Tirongo who still wanted to push women to the periphery of good land. Hence the reform exercise had its own challenges it was not smooth sailing all the way. The irony of it all is that the youth who want to push elderly women who have participated in the war did not participate in the war for they were still babies (Vambe, 2006: 270).

Apart from elements like Tirongo who wanted to push women to the margins where there was no road and there are wild animals that destroyed the crops, Mutasa also demonstrates that there was corruption in the land reform exercise. Some people were asked to pay for this land by some opportunist elements who were now selling land. One youth says:

Minda iri pano asi yoda mari. Minda iyi yakasiyana neiya yatakange tichipa mazuva apera...Kuti muwane munda munototi mubhadhare chete. Munoziva here VaChandavengerwa, kuti paminda yaveko mazuva ano pava nedzimba? Naizvozvo

imi hamunganogari mudzimba dzavamwe vanhu musingabhadhari simba ravo...Mave kuda kufananidza minda yedu nesupamaketi dzamabhunu aitinetsa aya, nhai? Hatitengesi tichiita zvamaeka izvi. Tinongotengesa musha nomunda wavo. Taida kuti imi mutaure mari yamunokwanisa tobva takupai munda. Kana tikachaja isu, munozoti vana ava vakaipa. Maida kumapeto here kana kuti pakati? Kumapeto kunochipa nekuti kunonetsa nemhuka dzesango (pp. 58-59).

(Farms are readily available but you now have to pay for them. These farms are different from the ones we gave before ... In order for you to get a farm you just have to pay. VaChandavengerwa are you aware that the current farms now have buildings so you have to pay for the buildings to honour the hard work of the previous land owner. Our farms are different from the irrigation scheme acres. We sell the farm and the house. We want you to tell us the amount you are prepared to pay and then we will give you the farm. If we charge you, you would say these children are greedy. Do you want a farm at the outskirts or in the middle? The outskirts are cheaper due to the problems of wild animals).

Thus selling land would further marginalise women from accessing fertile land since most of them did not have the financial resources to purchase land at such exorbitant prices (Gudhlanga & Chirimuuta, 2010). Such mal-practices further discriminated women from owning the land resource and if ever they managed to raise the money they would definitely get land at the outskirts, which was neither fertile nor secure. Mutasa brings to the fore such unprofessional conduct so that he warns the people against such deeds that wanted to perpetuate gender discrimination in land ownership.

The FTLRP reform programme is also characterised by regionalism and ethnicity, “*Akudzwa kuti adzokere kuMatabeleland South. Uyo anopa minda akati, ‘Bhudi, la eMatabeleland North asiniki umhlabati abantu abaphuma ezansi kwaNtuthuziathunqa, koBulawayo. Vazokunika umhlabati ngale ngase Matabeleland South’*” (p. 61). (He was told to go back to Matabeleland South. The one who was allocating land said, ‘Brother here in Matabeleland North we do not give land to people who come from the south of the city of Bulawayo. They will give you land there in Matabeleland South). Also another potential recipient of land is denied land in Gweru on the basis of the fact that the Karangas in Gweru are not the same as the Karangas in Masvingo so he was supposed to go back to Masvingo to get land from his place of origin (p. 60). Such were some of the challenges that marred the FTLRP.

Futhermore, Mutasa highlights the issue of absentee landlords who took farming as a part time job. White farmers succeeded because they took farming as a full time job and they resided on the farm overseeing the general daily operations of the farm. Most of the land reform beneficiaries are engaged in some form of employment or another. Sekai who gets a very big farm is a government official and in is charge of overseeing the national land reform programme. Upenyu is employed at Colcom in Bulawayo and also visits his farm irregularly; same applies to Zakaria who is employed on a full time basis by Delta Corporation in Harare. Sekuru Gwariro is based in South Africa and manages his farm from there. By depicting all land reform beneficiaries as people who are fully employed elsewhere Mutasa clearly shows the challenges the Zimbabwean land reform has. For as long as these beneficiaries do not realise that farming is a full time job it will be very difficult for them to get to the standard of the former colonial white farmers who took farming as a full time job and exerted themselves fully in the business of their farms.

This idea of part time famers is not typical to Zimbabwe alone but Kenya experienced similar problems where most of the beneficiaries spent their time in urban areas without permanently staying on their farms. Writing about land reform beneficiaries in the Kenyan context Ngugi says:

For unlike their settler white counterparts who farmed full time and reinvested in their lands, the new owners did so on their telephones for they have other full time jobs, yet they want the state to continue guaranteeing them profits by underwriting their credit (Ngugi, 1986: 21).

Mutasa is suggesting that unless land reform beneficiaries, both men and women, take farming seriously they would not yield their maximum potential as did their predecessors, the dedicated and committed colonial farmers. Moreso, Mutasa is demonstrating that some of the new land reform beneficiaries of the FTLRP only want to benefit and reap from what the previous colonial masters have invested and do not bother to invest more in the land they have seized. This is also echoed by Fanon (1963: 153-154) who says of the taking over of land by post-independent African countries;

The big farmers have, as soon as independence is proclaimed, demanded the nationalization of agricultural production. Through manifold scheming practices they manage to make a clean sweep of the farms formerly owned by settlers, thus reinforcing their hold on the district. But they do not try to introduce new agricultural methods, nor to farm more intensively, nor to integrate their farming systems into a

genuinely national economy. In fact, the landed proprietors will insist that the state should give them a hundred times more facilities and privileges than were enjoyed by the foreign settlers in former times.

Mutasa, therefore is encouraging FTLR beneficiaries to detest from such thinking if they really want the country to progress. He encourages them to exert themselves and work hard to achieve food security and economic growth for the nation. Both male and female land reform beneficiaries are being encouraged to work hard and not to literally run down what they have taken over on the former white colonial farms.

Apart from absentee landlords and those who are literally running down the farms, Mutasa also brings to the fore the issue of shortage of inputs like fertilisers, seeds, draught power and modern machinery like tractors. Coupled with this is also the lack of farming knowhow among the land owners. The previous white land owners did not have such challenges because they got loans from their government. Manjengwa, et. al. (2013) state that under the Smith regime white farmers got bank loans and subsidies of about of USD40 000 per year to assist them with their farming business. Furthermore, they were also given free 2-year training to capacitate them with the agricultural knowhow that enabled them to profitably run their farms. They also further state that most countries in the world subsidise their farmers; and the “European Union subsidises its farmers at the rate of USD750 per arable hectare, Thailand subsidises rice and hence can export it” (Manjengwa, et. al. 2013: 27). If countries like Zimbabwe also subsidises their farmers it is called dependency syndrome by the west and yet they too are busy subsidising their farmers, and these same western countries regard shortage of farming implements of FTLRP beneficiaries as failure of the farmers to produce productively. Mutasa highlights the hypocrisy of the western world for condemning subsidies when they are offered by poor countries like Zimbabwe but other wealthier nations like the EU and the USA are doing the same thing to their farmers. Manjengwa, et. al. (2013: 27) have further affirmed that “EU sanctions have been removed from most political Zimbabwean leaders but are still imposed on the 174 000 fast track land reform farmers, who cannot be helped by any Non-Governmental organisation working with European Union money.” With such challenges new land reform beneficiaries face a lot of challenges in improving their farming business. Mutasa makes this clear as a way of educating people that they should not be quick to condemn the new land reform beneficiaries whose playing field

has not been levelled. However, they are trying their best since production has improved as attested by Hanlon, et. al. (2013).

The other challenge that the FTLRP is facing is shortage of amenities. Mutasa depicts that apart from occupying farms that were already under production with all the social amenities, the new land reform beneficiaries have also acquired land in virgin areas that had not been farmed before. Such areas lack social amenities like toilets, schools, shops, running water among others. This has increased the burden of women who have to walk long distances to fetch water. Also, lack of such has resulted in diseases like diarrhoea that are associated with poor sanitation (p. 65). In addition, Mutasa also highlights through Sekai the problem of people who have resettled in game parks, poaching wild animals. The government showed its commitment in preserving these game parks by sending soldiers to evict people who have settled in game parks.

Mutasa does not only parade these challenges that have characterised the FTLRP but goes a step further to proffer possible solutions through Sekai the head of the government's national land reform unit. Sekai moves around the country trying to tell people on how they can overcome these challenges. Mutasa bestows upon a woman like Sekai such an important role. Sekai highlights to new land reform beneficiaries that both men and women have a right to own land in their individual capacities. Women could now apply for land as individuals not as their husbands' dependents. Mutasa is depicting the mode of accessing land for women which redresses the gender injustices in land ownership. Furthermore, Sekai's whirlwind tour of the new resettlement areas in the country demonstrates the government's renewed commitment to the FTLRP (pp. 111-133). She encourages people to build toilets, and she also assures them that some social amenities like schools, clinics and supermarkets were going to be built. She also warns people against regionalism, corruption and encourages them to work hard because A2 farm units are given to people who have the resources to manage those farms. Through Sekai, Mutasa also discourages land reform beneficiaries from poaching but encourages them to conserve their wildlife and vegetation cover, and suggests to them to venture into tourism. She advises them to fence off the area with the wild animals and charge people to come and see their animals (p. 129). As a graduate in Agriculture and Environmental Studies, Sekai sees a lot of opportunities in her country of birth which she also

imparts to the new land reform beneficiaries. Additionally, Sekai informs people of the government audit on land which intends to resolve the problem of multiple farm owners. Each person is supposed to own just one farm. Thus through Sekai, Mutasa discourages multiple farm ownership and promotes accountability among land reform beneficiaries. Failure to do this will result in further skewed land ownership patterns, this time in favour of the political elites.

Despite the challenges that the FTLRP has encountered it has enabled women to access land under the new forms of ownership. Women are also directly benefitting in their own right with the lease permits drawn in their names and not in the man's name. Mutasa has clearly demonstrated that women can now be allocated land in their own right as individuals and not to access it as dependents of men as happened in previous forms of accessing and owning land in which the permit or title deed was written only in the man's name. In the FTLRP women can, just like men, apply for their own land, they can also be allocated land in their own right. One respondent has noted this achievement on Mutasa's work and states that:

Mutasa has amply shown that land is not a preserve of men but that all productive individuals regardless of sex need to benefit for the good of the nation. Land ownership need not be sexist and discriminatory across the polity. I think Mutasa was very bold because he presents women getting their own allocations of land during Zimbabwe's Land Reform Programme of the 2000s. Indeed *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* diversifies and broadens readers' awareness of the need to be more inclusive in terms of gender. It shows the woman as a key stakeholder in the polity's development matrix. By extension, it challenges policy makers to revisit the issue of gender in land redistribution (Field Notes, April 2016).

Mutasa through his novel *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* has called for gender justice in the FTLRP. Women have been marginalised by codified customary law which was heavily entrenched with Victorian values. This western influenced customary law deprived women of the rights they formerly enjoyed in as far as land ownership was concerned. Mutasa has boldly presented how women can overcome the colonially induced deprivation in land ownership in his novel, *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*. The following section critiques Mutasa's social vision.

5.5.4.1 A Critique of Mutasa's Social Vision in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*

Mutasa can be applauded for vividly focusing on gender justice in the FTLRP, an aspect which has not been plainly presented by previous writers. Choto and Moyo through they

discuss peasants' spontaneous occupations of white owned farms they did not change the forms of owning and accessing land on the part of women. Women still owned and accessed land even on the occupied farms through men who had the power to make decisions on seized land. Mutasa demonstrates that despite the fact that men are still in charge of allocating seized land, women now have the right to own it as individuals. Mai Chakurira and Sekai have been allocated land in their own right. They are not accessing it through their male counterparts. Mutasa should be applauded for discussing gender justice which had been sidelined in the first phase of the land reform programme in which the beneficiary was a male household head, and female headed families suffered.

In addition, Mutasa should be applauded for presenting the Zimbabwean people's propensity to accumulate agricultural land without necessarily staying on the land and making productive use of land. Not all men and women who have benefited from the FTLRP are full time farmers. He presents the historical truth that most Zimbabwean FTLR beneficiaries seem to have failed to appreciate that farming is a full time business which needs one to be committed and resident on the farm overseeing the operations on the farm as the colonial farmer used to do. Most of the FTLR beneficiaries are employed elsewhere, resident elsewhere and farming to them is secondary business which they operate using some remote-controlled mechanisms. Sekai who is educated in the west is a full time government employee, Upenyu and Zakaria are both employed elsewhere and sekuru Gwariro works in South Africa but all have acquired farms and are committed elsewhere in their full time employment and occasionally visit their farms. Through these, Mutasa has presented the nature and calibre of most FTLR beneficiaries in Zimbabwe. Hence he should be applauded for presenting the propensity of Zimbabweans to own agricultural land, both men and women when they practice cell phone farming since they will be engaged in their full time employment. He has presented the historical truth that has to some extent marred the FTLRP.

Despite the fact that Mutasa has been commended for promoting gender justice in land reform, some critics have argued that the number of women who benefit in the novel are too few to warrant meaningful significance. They argue that:

Yes Mutasa was bold enough. He depicts Mai Chakurira and Sekai struggling for land and winning pieces of land. However, the number of women who manage to grab land in his novel is too meagre. He also seems to glorify educated women as the right ones to own land. I am afraid her 'looking West' when the government calls for a 'look East' policy may derail women empowerment through land ownership for instance, Sekai goes to be educated in the USA instead of being educated either in Zimbabwe or in countries of the Eastern block. I also feel his reliance on letter-writing as a literary technique forbids him to be sophisticated and critical in his approach (Field Notes, July 2016).

In other words what the critics are saying is that the use of very few women to advocate for gender justice leaves a lot to be desired. What those critics fail to realise is that literature is symbolic, Sekai and Mrs Chakurira are representative of the educated and ordinary peasant women who benefited from the FTLRP. The use of such an educated and peasant woman as beneficiaries of the FTLRP is actually a plus on the author who has gone a step further not to only present elite women as beneficiaries of the FTLRP but even the peasant class as well that has benefited. Mutasa has gone further than Choto who only portrays beneficiaries of land in post-independent Zimbabwe as the emergent black male elites like Tumirai and Jeri at the expense of peasants like VaChimoto, VaKanyuchi and their families. The use of the epistolary approach has actually been hailed by Magocha and Makaudze (2010) as a refreshing approach which is very easy to understand and also enables readers to decipher what the character is thinking as compared to the third person narrator. One critique also mourned the fact that *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* was not published in Zimbabwe and therefore missed the opportunity of winning the Zimbabwe Book Publishers' Award for the exemplary and more encompassing way it has handled the FTLRP. Thus Mutasa in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* should be applauded for boldly promoting gender justice at a time under which social structures and political institutions seemed to be side-lining it.

Even though Mutasa has highlighted gender justice in the FTLRP in his novel, he has not demonstrated how this land reform has addressed land which was expropriated from the indigenous people through colonial legislations like the 1930 Land Apportionment Act which saw families and whole group of villages being dumped in barren areas has been compensated (Munyiswa, 2015). Munyiswa notes that the FTLRP "is not resettling families back to their original lands. Those families that were not affected in any way by the colonial government policies are benefitting as any other" (Munyiswa, 2015: 246). Of note is Chief Jahana of Insiza north who was moved with his whole village to Gokwe and came back to his

indigenous area in 2005 but cannot be easily accommodated there because there is commercial farming going on (Kufakurimwi & Bamu, 2015). Mutasa's FTLRP is not like the South African land reform programme which has considered restitution, a way of reinstating ancestral lands back to families that had been expropriated from indigenous land by the 1913 Native Land Act. Moreover Mutasa has not demonstrated how the prescribed land use patterns in the FTLRP cater for the initial uses that the indigenous people had before expropriation. Thus in endeavouring to resolve gender and racial injustices Mutasa has sidelined cultural or social justice in which the indigenous people could get land and revert back to the land use patterns practised before 1930 and not necessarily practising commercial and small scale farming, some land was used as burial sites, and the other for accommodation and numerous other cultural roles. Mutasa's *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* has not addressed restitution in its approach to land reform.

Despite all these seemingly shortcomings, Mutasa should be applauded for seriously discussing gender justice in land ownership, an important aspect which had been left out by previous forms of ownership. Sekai and Mai Chakurira have accessed land in their own right and not as dependents of men as what used to happen in Zimbabwe. Through Sekai, Mutasa has clearly demonstrated how women now have power to make decisions on land. This is meritable for Mutasa is the first writer who has boldly discussed gender justice in land ownership and has given it considerable coverage in his novel not just to mention it in passing as was done by previous authors.

5.6 A Summary of the Selected Fictional Works on the Second Phase of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme

Mutasa in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005) has distinctively captured the FTLRP that was officially rolled out by the government in 2001. He has highlighted the gains of the programme to the Zimbabwean populace. However, he has not just celebrated the FTLRP but has also discussed some of the dilemmas that have tarnished successful implementation of the government sponsored FTLRP. Notwithstanding the shortcomings of his work, Mutasa should be commended for courageously discussing gender justice in land ownership in Zimbabwe. He should be hailed for amply advocating new forms of land ownership which recognise women as individual beings who can access land in their own right and not as

dependents of men. Mutasa is a new voice on the Zimbabwean literary terrain who has vehemently argued for women to be given land in their own right. He has given an expose of the image of a black woman in Sekai who can also successfully use the land allocated to her. He has demonstrated through his writing that both men and women should benefit from the national cake, the land reform exercise. He should also be praised for noting the challenges of the FTLRP and offering possible intervention strategies.

5.7 General Overview of Gender and Land Ownership in all Selected Fictional Works

The selected fictional works present a general picture of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean history. The selected fictional works traverse all the historical periods that the country has gone through. The first novel to be published in Shona language, *Feso* (1956) presents gender and land ownership in the pre-colonial period. It also goes further to give an expose of how the colonial settlers first infiltrated the African landscape. *Pafunge* and *Dzasuka-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* are set in the colonial period and highlight the effects of colonialism on gender and land ownership during that period. *Vavariro* is set during the last years of the liberation struggle into the early years of independence. *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* is also set soon after independence, and this play together with *Vavariro* discuss disillusionment that characterised the early post-independence period and the spontaneous occupations of white people's farms which was regarded as illegal. *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* is set during the FTLRP period. From a superficial reading of some of the novels like *Pafunge*, *Vavariro* and the play *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* there might seem like there is nothing to do with gender and land ownership. However, from a critical expose of the works one can decipher gender and land ownership embedded in the images and symbols used. Thus all the selected fictional works have endeavoured to present gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean history.

Feso presents the collective form of ownership in the pre-colonial period. Both men and women own land collectively. There is no private property of land but land belongs to the ancestors for the benefit of all. It is allocated to male heads of families for the benefit of the whole family. Mutswairo vividly demonstrates that man had no total control of the land because they accessed it through their wives. It was only married men who were allocated land by the chief, once one had a wife that is when they were eligible to be allocated land for

the benefit of the whole family. Thus pre-colonial Shona traditional institutions like marriage enabled both men and women to access land which they owned collectively for the benefit of the whole family. Pre-colonial land was therefore collectively owned, there was no private property as happened in the colonial period. Men and women in pre-colonial society were compatible and benefited from the land resource through the other gender. The respective genders rendered to each other the necessary space in as far as land ownership was concerned in as far as land ownership was concerned. Women even had small pieces of land in which they decided what to grow for the benefit of the family. However, the novel ends when the colonialists had penetrated Africa and started to expropriate land, this therefore heralded a new form of land ownership in which blacks both male and female had been stripped of their land by the new invaders.

Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe and *Pafunge* are both set during the colonial period. Both novels present a new form of ownership, land was no longer collectively owned by indigenous men and women but it was now privately owned by the colonial masters who had dispossessed blacks of their land. In *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* Chakaipa demonstrates how colonial settlers stripped black men and women of fertile land and dumped them into barren areas which were not fit for human habitation. Dispossessed black men and women had no option but to seek employment on the new colonial establishments like the farm because the reserves were too barren to produce anything for the family. Those who remained in the reserves continue to suffer the effects of land deprivation. Both men and women had been disposed of their fertile land. *Pafunge* brings a new form of dispossession which is rarely discussed by many authors of Shona literature, the mission station which came in the guise of Christianity but stripping indigenous people of their land and constructed mission stations. Furthermore, it indoctrinated blacks and taught them to hate their culture and embrace the new religion. This new religion diverted indigenous people's attention from the land for they were taught to disregard all material things including land. Blacks in *Pafunge* are also condemned to barren reserves which are not fit for human habitation. Since men and women could no longer have sustainable livelihoods in the reserves, they moved into the urban area which again had no room for both black men and women. The dispossessed blacks in urban areas in *Pafunge* live under deplorable conditions, they have no employment and turn to criminal activities as evidenced by Josiah Rugare and his friends. Whites in urban

areas and on mission stations privately own land at the expense of black men and women who have been deprived of their fertile land and forced into barren reserves.

Vavariro portrays how dispossessed black men and women take up arms to fight the white settlers who have dispossessed them of their land. Choto presents how the liberation struggle ushers in independence. During the war the dispossessed peasants are promised land in post-independent Zimbabwe. However, after independence this did not materialise. Both *Vavariro* and *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* demonstrate how disillusioned black men and women spontaneously occupy the white owned farms to regain their lost land. However, they are evicted by the government which still respects private property as enshrined in the Lancaster House constitution. However, the government implements the first phase of the resettlement programme in which land was allocated to the household head who was presumed to be male. This type of ownership is different from the pre-colonial one in the sense that it respects private property since the land was leased in the name of the male head of the family, women's names did not appear on the land permits. This type of land reform was very slow and people were again very impatient and took it upon themselves to reclaim their land from the white settlers.

Sekai Minda Tave Nayo presents the last phase of the land reform programme in which the peasants both men and women with the aid of the veteran of the liberation war invaded white farms and redistributed land among themselves. In this phase of Zimbabwean history land is still considered as private property. However, the peasants who invade white farms are no longer evicted by the government as happened in the early 80s but have the blessing of the government. Under this dispensation both men and women can own land as individuals. Mai Chakurira and Sekai in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* benefit in their own right and do not access land through their husbands. Mutasa in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* has boldly addressed both racial and gender justice in land ownership in Zimbabwe and should be applauded for taking such a stance.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how gender and land ownership have been depicted in selected Shona fiction. The selected fictional works traverse the different historical periods that the country has evolved through. It has established how both men and women accessed land in the pre-colonial period as depicted in *Feso*. It has highlighted that women's access to land dating back from pre-colonial times has been mediated through their male relatives. It has exposed how the colonial legislations like the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and the Land Tenure Act of 1969 that have expropriated fertile land from indigenous people have also affected women's user rights to land in a negative way. The indigenous black men had no access to fertile land since they had been forcibly moved to barren land by the colonial legislations and thus no longer had land to give to the female gender for the production of crops that sustained the family. Moreover, the chapter has demonstrated that the dispossession of land by whites has in turn impacted negatively on the black woman who accessed land through her male folk. Life in the reserves was very hard since nothing could grow there, and yet the indigenous people had to pay numerous taxes that had been promulgated by the colonial regime. In this way, blacks had to move into colonial establishments of urban areas, farms and mission stations as exemplified in *Pafunge* and *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe*.

Moreover, the chapter has demonstrated that when the indigenous people could not take their dispossession lying low they had to actively participate in the liberation struggle against the white colonial master in order to reclaim their land which had been confiscated from them. The chapter has also exhibited that independence did not bring the land that the indigenous people expected as promised during the war. The government adopted a policy of reconciliation and adopted the World Bank policy of willing seller willing buyer in land reform. The indigenous people's hopes of regaining land were dashed, and hence they had to spontaneously occupy farms as depicted in *Vavariro* and *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo*. It also further demonstrated how these peasants were evicted from the farms they had occupied and were disillusioned because this is not what they had been promised during the war. It further demonstrated the changes in the government market-based land reform policies of acquiring land to radical seizure as depicted in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*. Mutasa through his novel, *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* has endeavoured to demonstrate gender justice in the whole land reform exercise.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

This chapter is the conclusion of the study and therefore summarises the findings of the research study. The study has been an Africana Womanist and Afrocentric analysis of gender and land ownership in selected Shona fiction. It set out to critically examine how selected fictional works handle gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. The research was an exposition of how authors of selected Shona fictional works used their literary prowess to re-build and re-cast gender and land ownership in Zimbabwean history. The study has analysed how the authors of the following fictional works; *Feso* (1956), *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* (1967), *Pafunge* (1972), *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* (1985), *Vavariro* (1990) and *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005) portray gender and land ownership in the context of Zimbabwean history. These selected fictional works were the primary texts of the study. In the analysis of the selected fictional works other fictional works published in Shona and English that explored male and female ownership of land in Zimbabwe were also cross-referred to give a clearer picture of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, since literature is a social science, works published in anthropology, history, agriculture and political science were also used in critiquing gender and land ownership in the selected fictional works. Data gathered from open-ended interviews and questionnaires were used to elevate the study from mere narration of what the authors have said to higher levels of scholarly conclusion.

The selected fictional works discussed in this study collectively discuss the historical correlation of the gender and land ownership from an Afro-centred perspective by employing the theories of Africana Womanism and Afrocentricity as guiding principles in the analysis of the selected fictional works. The works tackle the injustices regarding land, especially the persistent exclusion of blacks, both male and female from accessing land and other vital resources from colonial period right up to post-independence periods in Zimbabwe. The selected fictional works further demonstrate the relationship between the different historical processes and type of land ownership by gender that prevailed from pre-colonial right up to post-independence periods.

Additionally, the selected fictional works highlight the different historical processes that resulted in land dispossession and the ways in which the post-independent Zimbabwean government has tried to redress such imbalances. The different fictional writers, despite their works being set in different historical epochs, present through their narratives the different strategies taken by the marginalised and landless blacks, both male and female in trying to regain their heritage, which is the land. The selected fictional writers largely contextualise the quest for land within its socio-historical framework. The critical gaze that the narratives invoke is pertinent in correcting the colonially-induced racial and gender injustices that black Zimbabweans encountered. Of significance is the fact that the selected fictional works traverse the different historical periods that Zimbabwe as a nation has evolved through. They give a holistic picture of the gender and land ownership debate in Zimbabwe from the pre-colonial right up to post-independence periods. It is against this socio-historical setting that the authors' portrayal of gender and land ownership was analysed. Apart from presenting the research findings, the chapter also makes recommendations for further study in Shona literature as well as guiding principles to be considered for future practice in gender and land ownership practice in Zimbabwe in particular, and other countries that are also bogged with redressing colonial and gender injustices in land reform in general.

6.1 Research Findings

The research established that Shona traditional culture afforded the respective genders opportunities in terms of land access. In the pre-colonial period as exemplified in *Feso*, land was collectively owned by both men and women. Land ownership was located within the religio-spiritual realm in which it was allocated to the living by the chiefs who were the custodians of the land. This means that land in African cosmology belonged to the dead, the living as well as future generations. There was no private ownership of land nor discrimination by gender in land ownership patterns. Women accessed land through their male relatives but this did not mean that the female gender had less rights to that land. In that traditional set up, men could not access land as individual bachelors but could only access it through the marriage institution. Thus both genders relied heavily on each other in order to access land which they collectively owned. It was only through marriage that men were allocated land by the chiefs for the benefit of the whole family. Women could then access it through their husbands, and in some instances would be allocated small plots by their husbands to grow what they deemed necessary for the benefit of the family. The research also

demonstrated that this collective ownership of land was very different from the individual ownership which was ushered in by colonialism which brought in the commodification of land through title deeds and which clearly permitted individual allocation of land. This type of ownership marginalised both men and women who did not belong to the privileged few, that is, the white race that expropriated land and at the expense of black men and women.

The research further established that land in Shona cosmology was a sacred resource which was acquired through allocation by the chiefs. The chiefs as the guardians of the land required that the land would be allocated to a married man for the benefit of the family. This explains why marriage was a rite of passage which enabled man to access land for the benefit of the whole family. The woman therefore accessed this land through her husband. Widows would also own land through the male relatives of their late husbands' family. This demonstrates that land was collectively owned for the benefit of both genders who would use it properly for the advantage of the family members. To ensure that the land produced enough for the family, the spirit world through rain making ceremonies, provided the requisite rain for the successful production of food for the family. Land therefore, was a sacred resource which was collectively owned by the spirit world, the living, both men and women, and future generations. Hence it was supposed to be properly managed so that the generations to come could also benefit from it.

More so, the study established that the lack of land that consequently led to the abject poverty that characterised the indigenous men and women was colonially-induced. The poverty of black men and women in colonial reserves was prompted by the new system of land ownership and land use. Colonialism marked the genesis of African poverty for it ushered in land deprivation which ultimately led to poverty. Before the expropriation of the African people's land the black people in traditional societies had access to rich fertile lands in which they had bumper harvests reflecting the food security and sustainable livelihoods as exemplified in Feso. Colonialism through its numerous legislations stripped black men and women of the fertile land they formerly collectively owned. Through colonial legislations such as the Matabeleland Order of Council, Land Apportionment, the Native Land Husbandry and Land Tenure Acts which entrenched the division of land between European and African Land resulted in land becoming a European possession and private property.

Indigenous men and women were forcibly evicted from the fertile land which they previously enjoyed and dumped into barren areas which could not support any meaningful production of crops. The Native Land Husbandry and the Land Tenure Acts further endorsed black men and women's land expropriation. The fictional works *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe*, *Pafunge* and part of *Vavariro* vividly demonstrate how blacks tried to eke out a living in the barren areas they had been condemned to by colonialism. *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo*, *Vavariro* and *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* present black men and women charting their own destiny in trying to retrieve the fertile land which been seized by the colonisers.

Additionally, the study observed that both men and women suffered the effects of land dispossession in colonial Rhodesia. As a result the colonial legislations which expropriated land and dumped indigenous men and women into barren areas, both genders no longer had the right to land which they previously enjoyed before colonialism. Since land was now a private resource of the white colonial settlers, black men and women no longer collectively owned that which had been taken away from them. The study further highlighted that women no longer had the right to access their own small plots where they grew food crops since the land had been taken away from them. *Pafunge* and *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* vividly portray this land deprivation among black men and women. Both genders suffer the colonial effects of land deprivation as exemplified in *Pafunge* and *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe*.

Furthermore, the study revealed that in Africa the actual farmer is a woman. In all the texts studied, men are not presented as physically working on the land but are mainly involved in the allocation and redistribution of land but do not do the physical tilling of the land. The research demonstrated the propensity of women to work on the land. The hoe (*badza*) is synonymous to a woman who works on the land. Right from pre-colonial period in Feso up to post-independence period as exemplified by *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*, women are presented as the actual farmers who have a greater affinity to produce food on the land. In colonial times after men have shifted into colonial establishments such as the cities and mines; women continue to till the land and produce food for the family and are responsible for subsidising the capitalist economy. Rhodesia was known for its surplus food reserves which were the product of largely women on commercial and subsistence farming areas while the men, who had flocked into the urban areas, were tied to the exploitative labour of the industrial areas.

Rindai in *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva*, Paurosi's mother and Mavis in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* are presented as the actual farmers, the peasants who produced for the family and the nation at large. The women through practicing peasant agriculture become the breadwinners for their families. They provide for the families while men like Kufahakurambwe and Mhirimo indulge in beer drinking. In post-independence period as exemplified by Sekai in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*, women are still excelling in the actual physical farming. This explains why Sekai has even embraced the new methods of tilling the land, she drives her own tractor on the farm to demonstrate women's affinity with the land. The research therefore demonstrates that the depiction of women as housewives and of men as breadwinners is therefore a colonially-induced concept for in African traditional societies women tilled the land as farmers and produced food that sustained the whole family and the nation. Men in the pre-colonial period used to work the land with their women, a partnership that was disrupted by colonialism and urbanisation. The research rightfully presents the role of the woman as the physical farmer who worked on the land in partnership with men, a role which even colonialism stripped women of and elevated men to breadwinners while women were condemned to being housewives.

The study also revealed that in spite of stringent measures to keep what the colonial government termed subversive material at bay, the authors somehow found ways of publishing the effects of land deprivation on black men and women. The research demonstrated that some of the authors had to use their literary prowess to conceal land issues disguised in such works as allegories, and religious satire to capture land alienation of black men and women, and to present the different gender roles in relationship to land in a colonial set up as depicted in *Feso*, *Pafunge* and *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe*. The authors masked their stories under allegory and religious satire and managed to evade the austere censorship of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau which did not allow non-conformist literature to be published during the colonial period. Thus the research has vividly demonstrated that through the use of metaphors, symbols and literary images, the selected authors were able to discuss how colonial legislations resulted in the dispossession of land among black people and how both men and women were alienated from the land they previously enjoyed.

In addition, the study established that the flooding of urban areas by indigenous people, men and women is not usually associated with land dispossession. In actual fact it is a reflection of what had happened to the ruptured rural base as reflected in barren areas which are not fit for human habitation that the black people were condemned to. Thus black people flocked to urban areas to find alternative means of survival. Mr Masango and his wife, and Josiah Rugare in *Pafunge*; Wadyazheve and Mavis in *Dzasukwa-Mwana-Asina-Hembe* leave the reserves for the urban areas because the rural reserves cannot provide any means of sustainable livelihood since fertile land had been expropriated by the new colonial settlers.

To add to this, the research established that Christianity colluded with colonialism in dispossessing black men and women of their prime land. Usually land deprivation is associated with political forces while Christianity as a partner is venerated and left out. Not many scholars highlight the role played by missionaries in land dispossessions. The mission station signified by Mharapara and other mission stations in Pafunge took over land which was occupied by indigenous people. The setting up of various mission stations in the country therefore played a part in dispossessing people of their land. Furthermore, as part of the colonial ideological state apparatus, the Christian teachings encouraged black men and women to be submissive and be satisfied with the state of affairs. Christianity taught indigenous men and women not worry about earthly possessions like land and wealth but to seek the kingdom of heaven first and everything else was going to be added unto them. The blacks, therefore, blindly followed the new religion at the expense of their land. Thus the study revealed that Christianity colluded with colonialism in stripping black men and women of the prime land they formerly enjoyed and collectively owned.

Based on the novel, *Vavairo*, the research established that independence did not bring any changes in land ownership; it simply upheld the colonial dispossessions. Despite land redistribution being on top of the agenda of the reasons for waging the liberation war it was not an immediate focus of post-independence period, it took too long to materialise. The new government instead of quickly addressing the racially and gender skewed land ownership patterns went on to evict men and women who had acquired land on their own through spontaneous land occupations. Post-independence land wars are directed against minority whites and the emergent black elites who have gained land at the expense of the general

populace that fought the liberation struggle. Post-independence struggles of land are directed both at the minority whites and the newly emergent black elites as exemplified in *Vavairo*, *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo* and *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*. Those in leadership engage the general populace when it matters most during the war but after independence they did not go back to the people to explain to them the paradigm shift of the new methods of acquiring land after independence, instead the government uses brutal methods to evict the indigenous people who have spontaneously occupied white farms. The indigenous men and women are still landless and the farms they yearn to possess are still in the hands of a minority white people. The authors of the fictional works set in post-independence period vividly demonstrate that if the real issue of going to war, regaining the dispossessed land was not timeously addressed it was going to explode as what happened in the spontaneous land occupations in *Vavairo* and *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo*, and later under the *jambanja*, Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) period in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*.

The research has further established that the pitfalls of national consciousness in post-independent Zimbabwean land reform. It demonstrated that the new land reform beneficiaries grabbed productive farms from former white colonisers without the knowhow of farming. Instead the leaders in land repossessions want to enjoy the luxuries and profits of works already produced by the previous farm owners. There is no further investment into the knowledge of farming and general maintenance of the repossessed farms. Similarly under the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* there are also some land reform beneficiaries who are literally running down the farms they have newly acquired. *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* presents this as one of the challenges of the FTRP.

Furthermore, the study revealed that most of the new land reform beneficiaries are absentee landlords for they are not directly involved on the day-to-day running of their farms. Unlike the colonial farmer who resided on the farm and supervised the farming activities on site, the new FTLR beneficiaries seem to like using some remote control to manage and run the farm since they are gainfully employed elsewhere. These have been termed ‘cell phone farmers’ in informal circles; farmers who are negatively using mobile phones to manage their farming business from the centres of the city. Sekai is employed by the government in the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, Zakaria is employed at Delta Corporation in Harare, Upenyu works

for Colcom in Bulawayo and Mr Gwariro works in South Africa and runs his farm from there. Occasionally these FTLR beneficiaries visit their farms and quickly go back to their places of employment. The new FTLR beneficiaries fail to realise that farming is a full time business.

Additionally, the research revealed that land ownership and land possession in post-independence Zimbabwe seem to be associated with the male veterans of the liberation struggle with the exception of Sekai and Mrs Chakurira in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*. Most of these veteran land reform beneficiaries lack the requisite qualification to properly manage farms. It is only Sekai a female beneficiary who has the requisite qualification to run a farm, and possibly Mrs Chakurira by virtue of being a woman had farming experience since in Zimbabwe it is women who are seen to till the land and not men. Unlike in the colonial period in which everybody participated in the struggle without emphasising social groups, the post-independence period now respects the emerging social classes. The few emergent elite black men together with whites now own land at the expense of the rest of the masses, indigenous men and women as exemplified in *Vavariro*. Farming in post-independence period is now seen as a preserve of the old war veterans who are presented as having some attachment with the land because they fought for it; and yet the actual farmer in Africa is a woman. Based on the on the fictional works *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo*, *Vavariro* and *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* those who claim to have fought the liberation struggle now allocate to themselves fertile land and some disadvantaged social groups like women and the youth are allocated land in areas that are not easily accessible. The youth and women are not seriously taken into consideration as land reform beneficiaries. Even the first phase of the land reform allocates land to heads of households who are presumed to be male. Female headed households lose out.

The research also demonstrated that while women appear to be on the periphery of some of the narratives they are also key partners in the quest for land. The research also established that even though men want to overshadow women and elbow them out in land reform, they (the women) also need the land as exemplified by Sekesai's mother in *Vavariro*, Rupiza in *Kuridza Ngoma Nedemo*, Mrs Chakurira and Sekai in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo*. To demonstrate that women equally need land and could make very successful farmers, Mutasa

in *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* boldly presents Sekai who has successfully produced more than anyone else in the country. Through Sekai, Mutasa demonstrates that land is not a preserve of men but that all productive individuals regardless of sex need to benefit for the good of the country and nation. The novel *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* diversifies and broadens readers' awareness of the need to be more inclusive in terms of gender. It shows the woman as a key stakeholder in the polity's development matrix.

Additionally, the research established that while the first phase of the land reform programme used the marriage institution as a requirement for men to get a land permit, the second phase of the reform programme, the FTLRP did not use the marriage institution as a pre-requisite for one to be granted a land permit. Upenyu and Zakaria are still bachelors and they both benefit as youths in the land reform programme even though they are not yet married. Sekai as well, is a female unmarried land reform beneficiary who also could access land in her own right. Even married women like Mrs Chakurira also benefit from the reform programme as an individual and not through her husband. *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* presents the ability to own land as an individual and not through the marriage institution irrespective of one's gender.

Also, the research revealed that in both phases of the land reform programme in Zimbabwe, no particular effort was made to consider restitution as a way of reinstating ancestral lands back to families that had been expropriated from indigenous men and women by the colonial legislations which deprived black people of their ancestral homes. Moreover, the study has not demonstrated how the prescribed land use patterns in the FTLRP cater for the initial uses that the indigenous people had before expropriation. Thus in endeavouring to resolve gender and racial injustices the Zimbabwean land reform has side-lined cultural or social justice in which the indigenous people could get land and revert back to the land use patterns practised before 1930 and not necessarily practising commercial and small scale farming. Some of the expropriated land was used as burial sites, and the other for accommodation and numerous other cultural roles. The present study has not addressed restitution in its approach to land reform.

Finally, the study has revealed that in order for farming to be successful there is the need to subsidise FTLR beneficiaries and equip them with the technical knowhow. Sekai Minda Tave Nayo vividly highlights the need to support farmers in order for them to be successful. Without such subsidies and proper technical training the new land reform beneficiaries would continue to struggle in their endeavour to produce for the nation.

6.2 Recommendations

In light of the research findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations which can be divided into recommendations for future research and recommendations for future practice:

6.2.1 Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher makes the following recommendations for future research:

1. Since there has been emerging literature on gender and racial justice in land ownership, it is necessary to compare Zimbabwean literature in different languages, namely Shona, Ndebele and English to determine whether the gender and land ownership exposition is consistent in the literature produced in the different languages of the country.
2. This present research focused on selected fictional works, further research could also be done to see how other genres of literature like poetry, short story and drama portray the issue of gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe.
3. It would also be interesting to compare how male and female authors present gender and land ownership in fiction and understand the different circumstances that shape male and female authors' social vision.

4. It would also be remarkable to research further on how children's literature handles gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe. Such an endeavour would enable researchers to explore if Zimbabwean children are aware of the importance of land to both men and women as a source of livelihood for agro-based societies like Zimbabwe. It is necessary for children to start appreciating from such a tender age the importance of land to both genders and not for them to watch and think that that land issues do not concern them.
5. Since literature should reflect what is going on in society, it would also be fascinating to have further research on the portrayal of land and technology, to reflect how the current use of technology in agriculture is depicted in fiction and see if both genders have fully embraced it in their farming methods.
6. Moreover it would also be interesting to research on how the prescribed land use patterns in the FTLRP cater for the initial land uses that the indigenous people had before expropriation. Restitution of indigenous men and women's land would be a fascinating area of further research.
7. Literature has been dismissed as fiction and entertainment and yet it has so much to offer. Further research on how literature can be synchronised with research from other disciplines would be relevant. Since literature is a social science, researchers from other disciplines have a lot to benefit from it.

6.2.2 Recommendations for Future Practice

Apart from recommendations for future research, the researcher makes the following recommendations for policy makers or future practice:

1. Policy makers should revisit land ownership to include women. Since women have been attested as the farmers on the continent (and elsewhere) who physically work on the land, future land redistribution programmes should consider them as owners of

land in their own right. Land should be redistributed to the tiller, the woman who works on the land.

2. Irrespective of gender, marital status and war credentials, land ownership should be equitable. Any person considered an adult should have equal opportunity to benefit from land reform if they do so wish to farm. Currently, most of the beneficiaries are older males, veterans of the struggle and when they are no longer able to farm there will be another gap because the younger generation has not been properly oriented towards farming.
3. Africana Womanism put in perspective the importance of both men and women, can assist to explain that both genders were affected by colonialism and there is need to reorient both of them so that they could work together for the good of the nation. The traditional culture permitted the respective genders the requisite space regarding land access.
4. The willing buyer willing seller principle is a viable option for land reform. It does not result in total disruption of farming activities. This policy of land reform is fair in a business practice although it tends to marginalise those who do not have the financial resources.
5. Framers should be full time farmers, if possible with the requisite knowhow of farming.
6. There is need to reorient the nation towards agriculture since Zimbabwe is an agro-based society.

7. Land should be given on the basis of expertise, some experts were denied land in the land reform programme. In order to revive agricultural production, land should be given to those who have the technical knowhow. Those without should get some requisite training in agriculture.
8. To those allocated land there should be some mechanisms to check on productivity, FTLRP has been criticised because people owned large tracts of land which have been lying fallow.
9. Since white farmers were farming successfully and producing for the nation, these should be allowed to co-exist with black farmers. The black farmers would learn from the experienced and successful established white farmers on how to farm on a commercial basis.
10. Above all, in order for Zimbabwe to succeed in farming and reclaim its position as the breadbasket of the region, farmers will have to receive some subsidies as happens among EU and USA farmers who are heavily subsidised by their governments in order to produce for their nations.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide for Authors

I am Enna Sukutai Gudhlanga, a doctoral student with UNISA and my thesis is titled; Gender and Land Ownership in Zimbabwean Literature: A Critical Appraisal of Selected Shona Fiction. This research seeks to explore the way in which the writers of the selected fictional works handle land ownership in relation to gender. It also discusses how the colonial and post-colonial legislations affected gender and land ownership and how this is portrayed in Shona literature. This is because literature can never be dissociated from the environment which it emerges; it draws its images and themes from the society in general. In this light it is hoped that understanding the land issue and gender might even give lessons to the current land conflicts in Zimbabwe and would assist in policy formulation which would enable communities to come up with possible intervention strategies as regards to the land ownership in Zimbabwe in particular and the world in general. I therefore kindly request you to contribute to this research by providing your responses that will be solely used for purposes of this research. May you be kindly assured that the information that will be obtained from you will be held with the strictest confidence and will only be used exclusively for purposes of this research study and nothing more. The contributions will undoubtedly immensely contribute in the construction of arguments in the research.

1. As an author what inspired you to write about land?
2. Did you also address land ownership by women?
3. Did you address disparities in allocation of land between men and women?
4. Is equitable distribution of resources like land part of the issues you address in your works?
5. If your answer is yes, is your vision of equitable distribution of land harnessing gender dynamics?
6. How do you explain your characters' development in relation to gender and land ownership?
7. Do you view literature as a tool that can be used to redress topical issues like gender and land ownership?

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Schedule for Academics and Critics of African Literature

I am Enna Sukutai Gudhlanga, a doctoral student with UNISA and my thesis is titled Gender and Land Ownership in Zimbabwean Literature: A Critical Appraisal of Selected Shona Fiction. This research seeks to explore the way in which the writers of the selected fictional works handle land ownership in relation to gender. It also discusses how the colonial and post-colonial legislations affected gender and land ownership and how this is portrayed in Shona literature. This is because literature can never be dissociated from the environment which it emerges; it draws its images and themes from the society in general. In this light it is hoped that understanding the land issue and gender might even give lessons to the current land conflicts in Zimbabwe and would assist in policy formulation which would enable communities to come up with possible intervention strategies as regards to the land ownership in Zimbabwe in particular and the world in general. I therefore kindly request you to contribute to this research by providing your responses that will be solely used for purposes of this research. May you also be kindly assured that the information that will be obtained from you will be held with the strictest confidence and will only be used exclusively for purposes of this research study and nothing more. The contributions will undoubtedly immensely contribute in the construction of arguments in the research.

Place a tick in the boxes against the correct response.

1 Biographical information

a) Gender: Female Male

b) Age:

Less than 20 years old

21 – 30 years old

31 – 40 years old

41 -50 years old

50 years and above

c) Highest academic qualification:

Grade 7

Zimbabwe Junior certificate

“O” Level

“A” Level

First Degree

Master’s degree

Doctorate

2. What is your understanding of gender and land ownership?

3. Has gender and land ownership been a subject of Shona literature?

4. If yes give examples of the works it has been a subject.

5. Were the authors bold enough to deal with this subject?

6. In your opinion has Shona fiction highlighted the historical factors that have influenced gender and land ownership in Zimbabwe?

7. Has Shona fiction managed to present the changes in the traditional gender roles in relation to land ownership that took place with the onslaught of colonialism? Explain your answer.

8. In your own opinion are there any lessons to be learnt from Shona fiction's treatment of racial and gender imbalances in land ownership?

[illegible]

9. In your view, is Shona literature developing qualitatively with regard to handling issues like gender and ownership of land?

[illegible]

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire Schedule for Publishers

I am Enna Sukutai Gudhlanga, a doctoral student with UNISA and my thesis is titled; Gender and Land Ownership in Zimbabwean Literature: A Critical Appraisal of Selected Shona Fiction. This research seeks to explore the way in which the writers of the selected fictional works handle land ownership in relation to gender. It also discusses how the colonial and post-colonial legislations affected gender and land ownership and how this is portrayed in Shona literature. This is because literature can never be dissociated from the environment which it emerges; it draws its images and themes from the society in general. In this light it is hoped that understanding the land issue and gender might even give lessons to the current land conflicts in Zimbabwe and would assist in policy formulation which would enable communities to come up with possible intervention strategies as regards to the land ownership in Zimbabwe in particular and the world in general. I therefore kindly request you to contribute to this research by providing your responses that will be solely used for purposes of this research. May you be kindly assured that the information that will be obtained from you will be held with the strictest confidence and will only be used exclusively for purposes of this research study and nothing more. The contributions will undoubtedly immensely contribute in the construction of arguments in the research.

1. Is gender and land ownership a thematic concern in the Shona fictional works you have published?

2. How many works dwell on land and gender issues?

3. If yes which fictional works vividly discuss gender issues in relationship to land ownership?

4. Has there been any changes in the way Shona fiction presents gender and land ownership? Explain

5. In your own view has Shona fiction succeeded in capturing the gender and land ownership debate in Zimbabwe?

6. As a publisher are you contented with what you have published concerning land ownership in Zimbabwe?

7. Have the authors been bold enough to address the land and gender issue in Zimbabwe?

8. If your answer is no, explain what you think should be included in Shona fiction as far as gender and land ownership is concerned.

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire Schedule for Readers

I am Enna Sukutai Gudhlanga, a doctoral student with UNISA and my thesis is titled; Gender and Land Ownership in Zimbabwean Literature: A Critical Appraisal of Selected Shona Fiction. This research seeks to explore the way in which the writers of the selected fictional works handle land ownership in relation to gender. It also discusses how the colonial and post-colonial legislations affected gender and land ownership and how this is portrayed in Shona literature. This is because literature can never be dissociated from the environment which it emerges; it draws its images and themes from the society in general. In this light it is hoped that understanding the land issue and gender might even give lessons to the current land conflicts in Zimbabwe and would assist in policy formulation which would enable communities to come up with possible intervention strategies as regards to the land ownership in Zimbabwe in particular and the world in general. I therefore kindly request you to contribute to this research by providing your responses that will be solely used for purposes of this research. May you be kindly assured that the information that will be obtained from you will be held with the strictest confidence and will only be used exclusively for purposes of this research study and nothing more. The contributions will undoubtedly immensely contribute in the construction of arguments in the research.

Place a tick in the boxes against the correct response.

1. Biographical information

a) Gender: Female Male

b) Age:

Less than 20 years old

21 – 30 years old

31 – 40 years old

41 -50 years old

50 years and above

c) **Highest academic qualification:**

Grade 7

Zimbabwe Junior certificate

“O” Level

“A” Level

First Degree

Master’s degree

Doctorate

2. Would you consider gender and land ownership as one of the major subjects of Shona fiction? Explain your answer.

3. Has Shona fiction presented the historical challenges that surround issues of gender and land ownership debate?

4. In your opinion do you think Shona writers have succeeded in presenting the gender and land ownership debate in their works of art? Explain your answer.

5. Do you think authors were bold enough to address the question of land in general and gender and land ownership in particular?